AU-gust Writing Challenge 2022

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AU-gust Writing Challenge 2022

by slashyrogue

Summary

A collection of my daily AU-gust Writing Challenge fics/ficlets filled with many different types of Hannigram AUs

Day 1: Underwater

There had been a time in Will's life when he thought he could be happy.

He'd walked away from murder, got married, and honestly expected for a while that his life might not just be full of death.

Then the Red Dragon came.

A mutilated face, a divorce, and a move to Florida later here he was sitting on the beach outside his falling down house living the life of a hermit because of the terrified looks he got on the street.

The monster he'd become wasn't worth living as anymore.

Which was why he was about to kill himself.

He'd thought long and hard about how he wanted to die for weeks now, preparing, and wading into the quiet of the stream. The dock outside his house creaked as he walked down that night, holding the cement block he'd tied around his waist and knowing that no one would notice he was gone.

Will closed his eyes before he jumped in the water, tears rolling down his cheeks. He didn't struggle as the water filled his mouth, choking, and he took several deep breaths to bring more inside. They might never find his body, he knew, though if they did he'd be a bloated mess but at least he'd be free.

Done with all this.

He felt the water hit his throat, his vision blurring, and smiled as he sunk further down.

Will choked once more, struggling, and before he passed out entirely he felt like he was being embraced by the water.

Finally

Then, it all came rushing back.

Will woke in an unfamiliar shack, ramshackle and almost bare, staring around him. He moved to stand and fell on his face, groaning, only for someone to come to his aid.

"You're not strong enough yet," the stranger said, lifting him with ease while Will struggled to see clearly, "I apologize but…the effects may take longer because of your age. I…"

He blinked as the stranger laid him down again, and stared at him.

"What the fuck?" he asked, blinking.

The man in front of him had ash blonde hair and wore nothing but a pair of torn pants that looked like they'd seen better days. His skin was pale and obviously wet from the water, and he could have been almost normal if not for one thing.

His eyes.

The reddish hue to his eyes made him obviously not human, and when he pulled the blanket up over Will he noticed red on his hands.

"You shouldn't move, you're still healing."

"What…the…fuck?" he repeated, tears stinging his eyes, "Where the hell am I?"

The stranger reached over to pick up a bowl, and he held out a spoonful of reddish mush for Will to eat. "Eat."

"Where the hell…"

The stranger's eyes glowed as he growled. "You are in no position to argue with me, Mister Graham, if you want to live you will eat."

Will burst into laughter, covering his face, and heard the stranger's exasperated sigh.

"If I want to live? That's the LAST thing I want, you stupid…"

The creature grabbed Will's arm and yanked it down hard from his face. He was angry, that much was obvious, and up close he smelled like blood and the ocean.

"You would do best not to insult me, Will," he hissed, "As I am the only source of food you have."

"I already told you I don't…"

Will suddenly felt a pain in his stomach and doubled over, groaning, and the stranger stood to stare down as waves of agony went through him. He stared up at the creature, his cruel smile making Will angrier than ever, and he lifted Will's chin up to stare into his eyes.

"It's begun," he said, touching Will's cheek, "You will make a wonderful mate."

His eyes widened as the creature left him, and he forced himself to move crawling from his bed when he fell again. The creature made no move to follow as he went for the door, and when he was outside Will froze.

Water.

Everything was water.

Will looked up, confused, and another wave of pain hit making him sob.

“What…the…fuck?”

He heard footsteps behind him and didn’t move, even as the creature stepped right over him. Will noticed he was nude just before he hit the water, skin suddenly colored a light blue as he turned to look at Will fully.

His tail was turquoise, with flecks of purple, and his razor sharp teeth were terrifying as he smiled.

“Welcome home.”

Will’s vision was suddenly blurred as he fell forward, hardly able to lift his head, and when the creature stepped back onto their side of the world he was almost human. He lifted Will with ease, saying nothing, and the coolness of his skin made Will’s body fill with heat.

He laid him down again in bed, kneeling at his side, and smiled.

“Sleep, Mate,” he said, “Sleep.”

“I…I don’t…under…stand…”

“You will soon,” he purred, reaching out to touch Will’s cheek, “I promise.”

Day 2: Artist's Muse

It was a privilege, or so Will had been told, to be chosen as a muse.

The number was something like one in every hundred thousand, or so they said, and the type of artist you were given was always a mystery.

There were many different kinds of artists, so many different combinations, and yet there was one that absolutely no one wanted to inspire.

Killers.

There had been exactly ten artists who worked in death, visionaries all, and yet their muses never made it beyond the first year. Killers got too attached to their muses, too desperate to 'honor' them and that level of devotion was not something that could be avoided.

Every person in the world desperately wanted to be a muse, to live the glamorous decadent lifestyle being chosen afforded them and their families.

Every person but Will.

He knew four people in the past who'd been chosen, both in high school and college. The pure joy on their faces had never made him envy them, not once, and when others waxed poetic about them being 'so lucky' he'd never understood the appeal.

Who could live up to that much expectation?

His mother had been chosen when Will was just a baby, fresh out of high school, and she'd left him and his father high and dry. Will's anger at that, and his father's hurt, made him never want to be a muse.

Never ever.

Will graduated high school, college, and even got his master's without being chosen.

He breathed a sigh of relief when he was recruited but ultimately denied to be an FBI agent, and instead taught agents of the future. Will was content in his life, fine being alone as his own peculiarities made it hard for him to look someone in the eye without seeing everything.

Then, two days shy of his thirty third birthday, he got an envelope.

Will froze, staring at the delegate who walked up to him in class, and handed him the decree.

He'd been chosen.

By a killer.

Will read the words, not quite sure he wasn't dreaming, and stared at the excited looks on the faces of his students.

It was unheard of, being chosen as a muse so late in life.

And by a killer?

What kind of strange monster had Will inspired?

And how soon would he be on the end of their knife?

Day 3: Countryside

It all started with a business card.

Will woke one morning to take the dogs out at seven, their howls of need making him rush to the front door instead of the back, and when he stepped out the door a business card fell onto the porch in front of him.

He picked it up, barely able to make out more than just Lecter since the evening rainstorm had soaked the ink through. Will crumbled it up and tossed the mess into the trash herding the dogs to the back, not thinking much of it.

The nearest neighbors were miles away, but often he had a few come by to get engines fixed and things for their farms. He was one of the only houses around that didn't have horses or a farm, though a few of the older farmers joked he had a 'dog farm.' Which was the most idiotic joke in the world but he let it slide.

Will wasn't surprised moments after the dogs started doing their business the sound of a pickup truck engine revving before it shut off could be heard. He whistled to the dogs, herding them in a group, and all of them came to greet their visitor.

Mr. Huntley was in his seventies, widowed for as long as Will knew him, and had a tree farm about ten miles away. He waved to Will as they walked up, and Will saw a tractor sitting in his truck bed.

"Again?" Will joked.

"Those damn kids keep throwing rocks on my property from that new single mom I got next door. You're lucky you know, being all alone out here, you don't have to deal with all the shit neighbors do to your property."

Will smirked, petting Winston who was the only one who lingered while the other dogs came up to Mr. Huntley for attention. “Yeah, that’s what I’ve heard.”

“They keep getting rocks in the mower, you know, and it….”

“I’ll fix it, Horace,” he said, as the older man brought out a ramp, “And I’ll call you when it’s done. It might be a few days.”

“I got a few days, kid, it’s fine,” he said, shaking his head, “I mowed everything just as the little shits rock pile caught me.”

“That’s good I guess.”

“Yep,” he said, climbing up, “I’ll drive ‘er out for ya.”

“Alright.”

He did just that, driving down, and they brought the tractor to Will’s garage where he parked it handing off the keys. “You’re a godsend, Will, you know? We all say we’d be stuck with those big wig prices without you.”

“I’m glad to help.”

Horace patted his arm. “You do more than help, Kid, way more.”

He blushed and didn’t say anything.

The two of them started walking toward Horace’s truck, and Will felt awkward. Was he supposed to offer coffee or something? A bottle of water? He didn’t know, but as the older

man opened his door Will was ready to do both when he was interrupted.

"I forgot to tell you," Horace said, leaning in, "There's some new…hoity toity rich fella who just moved into Grace's old place. He's been bothering everybody, so he might be around you soon."

"I haven't…"

"His name," Horace said, squinting, "It's a weird one, something like…Hamilton? Somethin' like that? I don't know, I only heard about him from Billy. But he's been going door to door trying to get advice on the horse farm and all that. I expect he'll be outta there in a week or so."

Will laughed. "No one's gonna help him? Horses are hard work."

"Yeah, well," Horace said, stepping up into his big truck, "We don't need people like that around here. You know?"

He frowned. "What kind of people?"

"You know," he said, "Those…Richie Rich types."

Will let out a long breath he hadn't realized he'd been holding in. "Oh, *those* types."

Horace nodded, closing his door and leaning out. "You be careful, Kid, alright? Don't let him talk you into too much if he *does* come around."

"I will."

"Call me when it's ready, alright?"

“Ok.”

Will watched Horace leave, keeping the dogs close, and walked back to the house.

He only hoped he didn’t have to deal with this ‘Hamilton’ character. It was hard enough for him to try to socialize with the farmers. How the hell would he even talk to some rich guy?

Day 4 Alt: Soulmate

They said to find your soulmate was the most amazing experience a person could have. That your whole body explodes with wonder, happiness, and life just looking into their eyes.

Hannibal's parents were soulmates, met in high school and married just out of college. He'd watched them, calculating every touch, and their soulmarks they always touched before leaving to be 'alone.'

He knew there were some who never found their soulmate.

It was a very rare phenomenon.

Which was why when he found his he'd been a bit…disappointed.

Talia Trent was beautiful, no doubt, and her mark was identical to his. Her white blonde hair and sparkling green eyes stared at him in wonder. He'd frozen as she came up to him, her excitement catching the eyes of those around them at the symphony, and when she reached out to touch he'd almost recoiled.

The crowd clapped, patting them on the backs, and Talia had spoken all night words he'd barely listened to.

This was his forever person?

It didn't seem quite right.

He'd gone to bed that night with a sigh, promising Talia he'd call her tomorrow, and woke to head right for Jack Crawford's office. He'd asked him to look into someone, a consultant who struggled with empathetic issues while looking into murder cases, and he was eager to meet his patient.

Hannibal barely thought of Talia the next morning, more eager to meet Will Graham.

The moment he turned and saw Will Graham his heart leapt.

This.

This was what he'd been supposed to feel. His body felt warm, almost hot, and he desperately wanted to look under Will Graham's forearm to see his soulmate mark.

There had to be a mistake.

This was his soulmate.

He knew it more than anything.

Hannibal couldn't help himself from following when Will angrily left, ignoring Jack's voice calling out to him, and found Will by the elevator.

"I'm not dealing with…all this," Will said, sneering at him, "I can't believe…"

"Do you have a soulmark?"

Will blinked. "What does that have to do with anything?"

"Please, I…do you?"

He shook his head. "No."

Hannibal felt as if his heart shattered. “I…I see.”

“Do you?” Will asked, frowning.

“I…yes,” he said, “I just…I met my soulmate recently.”

“Oh.”

“She…she’s…”

Will sighed. “Dr. Lecter, I have to go.”

“Of course.”

Hannibal had stared at Will as he stepped into the elevator, his body still burning, and resisted the urge to join him. There had to be a mistake.

There just had to be.

The doors closed and he’d taken the stairs, hardly paying attention, just as his cellular phone rang.

“Yes?”

“Hannibal?” Talia’s voice rang out from the phone, making him sneer.

“You did call *my* phone, Talia.”

“Oh, yes, I…I was just…you said you’d call.”

“I have a job, Talia, and I…I’m currently occupied doing it. I’ll call you when I can.”

“Hannibal, wai…”

He ended the call, angrier than ever, and by the time he got to the bottom floor of the building his body felt normal again. Hannibal went home, bereft, and made a set of cupcakes.

Cupcakes were not his food of choice, not at all, and he knew when he was done that he’d made them for Will. Will, who he knew not at all, and currently despised him.

Hannibal frowned, staring at the cupcakes, and picked up his phone.

“Yeah?” Jack answered, sounding as if he’d rather do anything but.

“Jack?”

“Dr. Lecter?” Jack asked, “Oh, sorry I didn’t look at the name. I’m in the middle of heading out to view a body so…”

“Your killer has struck again?”

“Yes.”

“May I be of service?”

“I don’t know, Will really didn’t seem too keen on your help. I want him to be happy, Dr. Lecter.”

“Please, I…I want to make it up to him. Do you know his address?”

“I…no but he’ll be at the crime scene.”

“May I be there as well?”

Jack hesitated. “I…I guess one more person wouldn’t hurt.”

He gave Hannibal the directions, and he smiled ending the call. Hannibal then spent twenty minutes decorating the cupcakes, putting them in a container, and heading out.

Will was sitting on the edge of a car when he pulled up to the scene, seemingly lost in thought, and he walked over carrying his gift.

“Hello again.”

He looked up at him. “Jack didn’t tell me I was going to be psychoanalyzed again today.”

Hannibal held out the cupcakes. “I came to apologize, I…I was unaware you did not consent to being my patient.”

“Jack didn’t tell you?”

“No, he did not.”

Will stared at the cakes, and Hannibal’s heart skipped a beat when he smiled while taking one.

“This is the worst thing I could be doing,” he said, taking a bite, “But I’m hungry as hell.”

“I’m glad to be of service.”

They shared another smile, and Hannibal felt as if his life began anew.

Talia may share his mark, but Will…Will was his soulmate.

All he had to do was figure out why.

Day 5: Teachers

It was universally known that Dr. Hannibal Lecter was the best looking teacher at Wolf Trap High School.

The guidance counselor had only worked there for two years but just about everyone had a crush on him , even the parents - married and otherwise, but there was one person who seemed to despise him.

Mr. Graham, who taught Senior Biology.

Mr. Graham could be seen glaring at Dr. Lecter often when they passed one another in the hallways, and had been heard telling other teachers how “arrogant” Dr. Lecter was.

No one quite knew why Mr. Graham didn’t like him.

And he’d rather die than explain why.

His reasons were his own, and nobody would ever know. Will had spent two years severing friendships and practically making himself a pariah among the other teachers. He wasn’t about to tell anyone something so humiliating.

Then Beverly Katz came in as his student teacher. Beverly was everything Will wasn’t : fun, easy going, spontaneous and outspoken. The students loved her after only a month and soon even Will smiled more.

He trusted Bev, even with their large age gap - she was twenty one and he was thirty seven - he felt more comfortable with Bev than anyone else.

Which was why, one stupid night after work when she insisted he stop by he got a little too tipsy and told her the truth.

“YOU MADE OUT WITH HIM?”

He groaned, hands over his face, and laid his head down on her table.

“We barely kissed, it…he pushed me off and told me it was “horribly inappropriate’ and said he ‘thought better of me.’ It was…humiliating, I spent the first six weeks he started trying to read his signals and then he judged me like that? FUCK HIM! He’s the one who was bringing me lunch everyday and insisting I go to his pretentious stupid house for dinner then tells me I’m the inappropriate one? ME?”

Bev rubbed his back. “I’m sorry.”

“I then watched every staff member there fall head over heels for him and I just…I pushed them all away. Did you know I used to be super close with Mrs. Bloom - Verger, the English teacher?”

“No? I’ve never even seen you in the same room.”

He picked up his drunk and finished it off with a sigh. “That’s because she refused to uninvite him to her wedding so I didn’t go. She…she got really upset and I …”

Beverly hugged him and laid her head on his back. “I’m sorry, Will.”

“Yeah,” he sighed, “Me too.”

Will ended up crashing at her house that night and had dreams about what happened so long ago. Hannibal kissed him back in all of them.

And he woke up feeling worse than ever.

Especially when he got a text message from Alana.

YOU ARE INVITED TO :

THE WELCOME PARTY OF BEVERLY KATZ

WHEN: next Friday, 7pm-1am

WHERE: 722 EAST MAIN

TEXT H. LECTER at 555-555- 2345 for regrets only

He glared at his phone.

“WHAT THE FUCK?”

Hannibal was having HIS student teacher’s welcome party when he knew Will never came anywhere he’d been the past two years?

“Fuck this.”

He copied the number from the text and sent Hannibal a message.

I’ll be there.

Will stares at the text, his smile fading the longer he waited, and was about to put his phone away when an answer came.

I'm glad.

He feels odd, staring at the reply, and isn't sure what to say.

Why? So you can humiliate me again?

No, he can't say that.

Will chews on his bottom lip, completely at a loss, when suddenly Bev runs into the room.

"I CAN CANCEL! THERE IS NO WAY I'M—"

He lets his phone drop onto the bed and sighs, rubbing his eyes. "It's fine," he says, "I already told him I'm going."

Bev pulls her robe closer and frowns. "Oh."

"Good morning."

"Is it?"

He sighs again. "Could be worse."

“How?”

He shakes his head. “It could be YOU who still has feelings for him.”

“Will…”

He shakes his head as she comes closer. “Don’t, I…I’m fine. I’ll…find someone else. That’s how you get over people, right? Getting under someone else?”

Beverly laughs and flops down onto the bed hugging him. “That’s the spirit!”

He sighed, not sure what to say.

It had been almost two years and he still couldn’t stop thinking about Hannibal.

Would it ever go away?

Day 6: Fairies

Chapter Summary

Tw: animal death, child abuse, murder

Will's father was a monster.

Not the kind of monster they spoke of in fairy tales with fangs and red eyes.

No, not that type.

He just hurt Will whenever he could, not just hits with his fists either, and Will was so tired of being afraid.

Which was why he brought the sacrifice for the Fairy King. It was a bird he'd killed on his own, first with a rock to let it fall and then with his own two hands watching the life go out of its eyes. Will had cried then, seeing the pain, and yet he'd made certain the bird dead before wrapping it for the King. The cloth he'd pulled from his own torn ragged clothes, barely fitting now, and he'd walked to find a fairy ring.

The other children laughed when Will spoke of fairies, fantastical creatures that no one had ever seen, but he believed.

He believed in them.

Will's mother had read him stories of fairies saving children from harm and even marrying humans for love. He'd kept the fairy storybook she'd read from till his father burnt it in front of his eyes, and he'd wept even though by then he'd memorized every word.

No, fairies were real.

And Will was going to ask one to kill his Father.

He found the ring after hours of searching, nearly dark by then, and the ring of blood red flowers was small but it was enough. Will put the bird in the ring and bowed, tears filling his eyes.

“Please kill my father, Fairy King,” he said, his voice shaking, “Please kill him and take me away. Please.”

Will repeated his desperate plea till his voice was hoarse, and fell asleep in the grass only to be woken up when he was yanked by his hair.

“What do you think you’re doing, Boy?”

He winced when his father tossed him into the ring, landing on the bird, and he heard his father laugh. “Those goddamn fairies again, Boy? Huh? She’s still got yer head filled with that? You…”

Will froze when he looked up and saw a very tall man with giant wings behind his father. The man, whose eyes were blood red, smiled as he squeezed his hands around Will’s father’s throat.

“Hello, Will,” he said, “Thank you…for this gift.”

“I…”

His father struggled as Will watched, tears streaming down his face, and when he fell Will was suddenly taken into the fairy’s arms. Will was yet twenty but he wasn’t short, and the fairy stood nearly a foot taller than he. He was warm, almost hot, and Will had never felt safer than in his arms.

“Are you…taking me away?”

“Do you wish to be taken?”

Will pulled back to look up into his eyes. “More than anything, Sir,” he said, his voice shaking, “I..I want to meet the King and…beg him to let me stay.”

The fairy’s head suddenly burst and a fiery crown was above him.

“You already have.”

Will hugged him then, unable to let go, and when they disappeared no one saw him or his father again.

But he was happy.

His fairy tale had come true.

Day 7: Science Fantasy

Will had, for as long as he could remember, always heard a voice.

It began quietly when he was young, almost a whisper.

Hello.

His parents never told him about voices, or made him think he should have one, so he didn't tell them. He answered the voice back, curious about why it was there, and that's how his relationship with Hannibal began.

Just one word.

Hi

The voice, louder now that he'd answered it, soon became a constant companion. Will was excited to finally have someone to talk to, share secrets with, that wouldn't judge him for what he said. His parents often used him as a buffer for each other, tossing him back and forth till it hurt to even speak at all.

But the voice didn't.

The voice listened, was patient, and even did things like help him with his homework. Will's grades started to steadily improve over the next few years, though his parents' marriage did not. His mother ended up leaving when he was nine, not even a note on the table, and the divorce happened after but his father never remarried.

Will didn't care much though by then, years after the voice had come into his life, and soon he was about to enter high school.

Which was when the voice started to change.

It was still there for him, as before, but there were times when he could sense anger.

Do you think she's attractive?

Will frowned.

She's pretty, yeah.

She's not worthy of you, Will. Not worthy at all.

I don't think she likes me, so that doesn't matter.

You shouldn't like her either.

Will could hardly deal with trying to make friends, the voice drowning out any outside conversation, and by the end of his freshman year he was ‘Weirdo Will’ because of how often he got caught talking to himself.

His father didn’t notice how sad he was, so he had no one.

No one but the voice.

Why are you always here? Is there something wrong with me?

There is nothing wrong with you, Will.

Then why do I hear you, why….why does it feel like you’re real?

Because I am. I’m very real.

He stared up at his bedroom ceiling in tears. “You’re not real, you’re just…my imaginary friend I never let go of. You…you can’t be real, I’m just crazy.”

There is nothing wrong with you.

“Then show me,” he whispered, a tear falling down his cheek, “Show me you’re real. Tell me your name, tell me who you are, come out and touch me. Something, anything.”

It didn’t.

So Will did the only thing he could and went to his guidance counselor, Ms. Bloom. He sat down, looked her in the eye, and said three words.

“I need help.”

Which was how he learned to ignore the voice. He got put on medication when Ms. Bloom recommended to his father he see a psychiatrist, and learned exercises to ignore intrusive thoughts.

It was hard.

So hard.

Will, please don’t do this.

Will, you have no idea what you’re doing. Please don’t ignore me. I’ve been waiting for so long.

Will, please.

The voice got down to a dull buzz, always there, even when he graduated high school but by then he had grown out of his “weirdo” faze. He’d had several girlfriends, even one boyfriend, and though he was still strange he wasn’t the weird kid.

He went to college in hopes to become a policeman, and even got on the force by the time he was twenty five.

Then at twenty six everything changed once again.

Will got shot on a call - one he was told not even to go on - and got permanently injured. He was taken off the force, and headed home only to more terrible news.

His father was dead.

A car accident, it seemed, drunk driving that had him careen right into a telephone pole. So Will went home, buried his father, and sat on his old bed bursting into tears.

He felt broken.

He felt so alone.

Will laid back on his bed, tears wet across his cheeks, and after ten years he closed his eyes and spoke inside his head.

I need you.

There was nothing, not a single response, and Will laid on his side aching so badly he could hardly breathe. The pain in his upper leg made him whimper, still fresh even after six weeks, and he let out a sob.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered, “I…I’m so sorry.”

Will.

He let out a laugh, sitting up, and the voice seemed like a warm blanket.

I’m sorry.

I know, Will. I know.

My Dad is dead.

I know, Will. I’m sorry.

He closed his eyes, letting out a long breath, and laid on his back again.

Can you show me now? Show me how you’re real?

The voice was quiet, too quiet, and he feared again he’d be alone forever.

“I don’t need it,” he said, sitting up again with his legs on the ground, eyes open fast, “I just…”

Will froze when he felt something touch his leg and looked down to see a skeletal hand wrapped around his ankle.

Are you scared, Will?

His heart beat wildly in his chest as he shook his head, and the hand rose up to touch higher.

No.

You should not be. I would never hurt you. Never you.

Will had tears streaming down his face as he whispered two words.

“I want to see your face.”

This time the voice that answered back was not in his head.

“Soon.”

Day 8: Literal Hell

Will knew he was a demon from the minute he was born.

His father, however, did not.

Will's mother left mere days after he was brought home from the hospital, exhausted and hollow eyed according to his Dad. He never found her, no matter how hard he looked, but Will thought maybe she hadn't run away.

The demon who made Will took her.

Had it killed her? He didn't know, but thought it was more than likely. Will had no feeling for his mother, though his father was the only one who treated him with kindness. Unless he made it otherwise.

Will could get into someone's mind with ease by the time was in eight grade, but the road there was rough. He could make most people like him, had to because otherwise his strangeness showed through.

He gained fire in high school, waking up one night with flames running up his arms, and he tossed his sheets in the trash before Dad could see.

The fire was harder to control, but he learned, and when he inadvertently found a serial killer roaming the neighborhood in his sophomore year he burned him alive.

Which was how he began killing people.

His father didn't know, or maybe didn't care, he wasn't sure. But the bodies never piled up, all turned to bones and ash, which made the town safer. And gave Will his direction in life.

Will began researching Criminal Justice, and killers in general until he graduated ready to join the FBI. Their rejection was something he couldn't control, which was upsetting, but he became a teacher of agents instead. He wouldn't be able to catch killers this way, but no one needed to know what he did in his spare time.

His prolific murder sprees grew more intense in Baltimore, perhaps too much, but his hunger to see the fear in their eyes made it hard to stop.

So someone else stopped him.

One minute he was in the midst of burning a child killer alive and the next he was standing in a room surrounded by fire. A man sat on a red curved chair across from him, and he had glowing red eyes.

"Hello, Will."

Will found he couldn't move from the chair he was in so he just glared. "Are you him?" he asked, "Are you my father?"

The demon across from him started to laugh, the sound going right to Will's very bones, and one minute he was across the room then the next he was almost in Will's lap. He was more handsome up close, his face a mix of curves and lines that were hard to look way from, and his smile was filled with jagged sharp teeth.

"No," he said, smiling, "No, I am not. Your father…was a lowly thing that has long since been punished for his actions."

Will felt tears fill his eyes. "Then what do you want with me?"

The demon grabbed his face with one hand, so close that Will could smell the brimstone coming off of him.

“I want you, of course,” he said, leaning in to whisper in Will’s ear, “I’ve never seen a hybrid so hungry for death. Would you…like to torture them here? Burn them, cut them, whatever you’d like.”

“Who…who are you?”

The demon pulled back, and to Will’s shock a long tongue came from his mouth when he licked his own lips.

“Some call me Lucifer,” the demon said, “But…I’ve long since tired of the name *he* gave me. You…you can call me Hannibal.”

Will let out a long breath. “If I say no?”

“Then I will send you home, but…your powers will be taken from you. All of them.”

He imagined going home, alone, with no way to make anyone see him as more than the strange thing and having no one but his father.

“My father…”

“Will forget you,” Hannibal said, touching his cheek, “He will forget you, and move on with his life. He’ll forget your mother, find a wife, and even have children.”

“His own children,” Will said, his voice shaking.

“Yes.”

He closed his eyes. “I…I’ll stay. I’ll stay.”

The magic keeping him frozen was gone at once, and he nearly fell forward into the Devil's arms but held back to glare at him.

"Welcome home, Will. I promise to make it so you'll never regret your choice."

Will felt tears sting at the corner of his eyes.

"I already do."

Day 9: Coffee Shop

Chapter Summary

TW: Omega Hannibal/Alpha Will - subsequent chapters WILL be bottom Hannibal

Age gap - Will is older than Hannibal by like a decade

Will Graham was thirty one years old, unmated, and shockingly…unpresented.

It made for a very bleak dating history, mostly people who wanted to trigger his presentation and ended up extremely disappointed or angry they didn't.

So when he decided to just give it up for good and live his life alone he was a little sad but resigned to his fate. Then fate pushed him in another direction.

His best friend Beverly, an alpha and very against Will's new commitment to being alone, invited him to the ballet.

"Ballet?" He laughed, "Did you just meet me or…?"

Bev smirked, wrapping her arm around his side and whispering in his ear. "Picture it: a stage full of twenty something dancers - all gorgeous in tight outfits dancing and flexing those taut dancer muscles in soft lighting….most of them omegas. I've heard the omega star is brand new and so beautiful he looks like he's been etched by marble but they don't put him on the posters because word of mouth is sending people to see him."

Will licked his lips, shamefully excited by the idea. "Maybe he's not that great, maybe…"

Bev pulled out her phone and brought up a picture.

It wasn't even a face, just a body. The picture was blurry, like it had been taken on the sly, and the caption under it said: "The Baltimore Ballet keeps reporting this but LOOK AT HIM! LOOK AT MY DREAM OMEGA'S PERFECT MUSCLES!"

He let out a breath, his body oddly warm.

"H..how did you even get tickets?"

"I got two tickets late last night completely by chance because my best friend wants to lock himself away never trying to date again so I figured I gotta pull out the big guns. So…what do you say?"

Will let out a long breath. "Ok."

And so, two nights later Will and Bev sat in the back of a crowded theater waiting for the star, Hannibal Lecter, to grace the stage. When he finally came out as Prince Siegfried, the prince who falls for the cursed Odette, the whole theater gasped in surprise. Will's whole body felt like it was on fire as he watched Hannibal dance, the younger man moving with a grace and beauty that was unmatched. He'd never seen an omega so beautiful in his entire life.

"Will?"

His cock felt heavy and hard in his pants, aching, and Will shot up from his chair running from the theater. He ran to his car, not stopping to text Bev, and drove the hour home in agony.

The next five days were hell.

But Will presented as an alpha.

He woke up on day five, exhausted but not in a rut, which made it easier to call Bev. She answered on the first ring.

"You better have a damn good excuse for ignoring me for so long! I tried to break into your house, you know? If you hadn't told me to leave…"

"I went into a rut," he said, his voice thick, "I…I'm an alpha."

Bev was quiet.

"Bev?"

"Shit, really? Was it…"

"All those dancers I guess," he lied, hating himself, "I…"

"Bullshit," she said, "Will, you've been to strip clubs with me! It wasn't the dancers, was it?"

"Bev…"

"I'm headed to Brew & Buzz for my shift and I expect you to be there. We're talking about this."

"You're working."

"So? We're talking about this."

She ended the call and Will, embarrassed and exhausted, dragged himself to the shower. He refused to let himself think about his rut, five days and fucking his fist and fantasizing about one omega who had to be a decade younger than him who he'd never even go near again.

It was just a fluke.

That was all it was.

He drove to Bev's job, Brew & Buzz, the very place they'd met in college, what felt like a hundred years ago. She was the manager now, but still found time to help out more than most would.

The crowd was about right for the morning rush, and Will felt a little overloaded with the sudden scents of so many he hadn't experienced before. His stunted presentation had made it impossible for him to smell if someone was beta, omega, or alpha until now and he wasn't sure he could stand it much longer.

Bev spotted him halfway up the line - thankfully - and pulled him out bringing him up to the front stools.

"You look like shit."

"I told you."

She frowned, heading around the counter to make him a drink. "You know, most omegas I know would be super flattered to know they triggered a rut."

Will blushed. "Bev, we're in public."

"Oh who cares?" She scoffed, handing him a black coffee, "I'm sure they heard it all before."

Will sipped his coffee, not looking at anyone, and Bev sighed.

"Will, ignoring me is only…"

"He looked like he was twenty years old, Bev," he hissed, almost shaking, "No gorgeous famous twenty year old is gonna want a mechanic struggling with a shit ton of issues who's a decade older than him and I'm…"

A scent hit his nose and Will froze.

Oh.

"Will?"

He turned, heart beating wildly in his chest, and to his shock there near the end of the line of coffee shop patrons waiting was Hannibal Lecter.

"He's…he's here."

"What?" Bev said, rushing around the counter, "Oh shit. Will, you've got to talk to him. You can pretend the show was a fluke but this, this is…"

Will rushed away from the front counter, blushing like mad, and couldn't find it in himself to go anywhere near Hannibal so he sat as far back as he could.

And watched.

For the next hour he watched Hannibal get coffee and a scone, sit down, and have some of both while he wrote in a notebook. The omega was even more handsome like this, dressed in regular clothes but also dressed up more than anyone in the whole place.

Several people came over to him, obviously flirting, but he rebuffed every single one even handing back papers with phone numbers probably on them.

Will didn't touch his coffee the entire time, so caught up in his watch, and had to force himself to stay seated when Hannibal got up to leave. He bit his lip so hard he tasted blood, desperately pining he was almost in distress, and couldn't help but stare as Hannibal walked out.

But he gasped when Hannibal looked back at the door and their eyes met.

Time seemed to freeze in those few seconds but Hannibal just turned and left anyway.

Will finally sipped his now cold coffee as Bev came running, blushing when she grabbed his arm.

"You stupid idiot," she whispered, "That was probably your one and only…"

"Drop it," he growled, pushing her off, "Just fucking drop it."

Bev frowned as he got up, rushing for the door, and tossed his cup in the trash before he got outside. The air did little to settle the pit of disappointment in his belly, and headed for his car.

Only to pause when he spotted a very familiar backside leaning against a Bentley parked just across from his truck.

"…but I cannot wait an hour for your tow truck! I have to be at rehearsals in twenty minutes not…"

Will knew he could go.

He should go.

But instead he took a deep breath and walked over tapping Hannibal on the back.

"Excuse me."

Hannibal turned, looking annoyed, but then he inhaled for a moment his expression softening.

"Yes?"

"I'm a mechanic, I…I can take a look if you want."

Hannibal blinked. “You’re certain it’s no trouble?”

Will shook his head, hating how much he was blushing. “No, it’s…no I’m sure it’s not.”

Hannibal ended his call and put the phone into his pocket. “Thank you, I…I have a very important..”

“Yeah I heard, just open the hood for me? I have my tools in my truck.”

“Of course.”

He turned away, trying to calm down, but was sweating bullets already.

What if he had another rut?

Was it worth helping Hannibal?

Will thought it was.

He grabbed his tools and headed back, thankful that Hannibal stayed on the other side of the car. It did little to hide his scent, but maybe it would hide Will’s.

“Can you try to start it for me?”

“Oh yes I’m sorry I didn’t…”

“It’s fine.”

Hannibal got into the car and tried to start it.

Will knew immediately what the problem was.

“That’s good,” he said, “you can stop now.”

Hannibal leaned over, frowning. “Do you think you can fix it?”

“It’s the battery,” he said, “I think the connection is loose.”

“Can you fix it?”

He smiled. “Yeah it’s just tightening things up, that’s all. Give me a second.”

Hannibal smiled and it made Will’s heart skip a beat. “Alright.”

He leaned over, tightening things as much as he could, and the scent of the car helped mask Hannibal’s enough that he calmed down.

“You can try it again.”

“Alright.”

Will watched him get in the car again, and turn the key.

The engine shot to life at once, and Will felt like he'd killed something that he'd dragged to his mate.

It was a ridiculous feeling.

Hannibal wasn't his.

"Thank you so much!" Hannibal said, blocking Will's way when he tried to retreat, "If there's any way I can repay you, I…"

Will blushed again, his cock harder than ever with Hannibal so close, and to his horror Hannibal stepped closer breathing in deeply.

"It's…it's no trouble I just…"

"You smell wonderful," Hannibal purred, "Like…I cannot describe it. Your obvious attraction it's…I've never…"

"Please I just…"

Hannibal reached out to pull on his shirt. "What is this?"

"I…I don't know."

He pressed himself to Will, their bodies so close Will whimpered, and he sniffed Will's neck.

"I've never believed in spontaneous mating before now but…are you my alpha?"

Will groaned, suddenly pushing him back to run to his car. He ignored Hannibal calling after him, peeling out of the parking lot and not looking back.

No.

He was not doing this.

He drove nearly three miles before he had to pull over and jerk off, growling and grunting his release. It felt hollow, wrong, and as he drove home Will knew he was a coward.

What good would he do for someone like Hannibal: a young, beautiful omega with everything ahead of him?

He got home and called off again before going into his second rut in less than a week.

This time it lasted only three days but by the end he was even less satisfied.

Will called his job at Crawford Motors and Jack thought it was funny more than anything. He told Will not to come in till Monday.

Which only made him dread calling Bev again.

“Another one?”

He sighed. “Yeah.”

“Cuz you helped him with his car.”

Will blinked. “How did…”

“He’s come in here every single day since you left looking for you, and I…because I’m a good friend…didn’t tell him I know who you are. He’s not here yet but I’m sure if you come in…”

“I’m not coming.”

“Will, don’t be an idiot! He even told Jimmy he thinks you’re his alpha and that his heat is coming soon. You want him to go through it alone …or with some other knot in him?”

Will growled. “Bev…”

“Maybe I’ll help him! I’m sure…”

Will ended the call, so angry he was shaking, and didn’t bother showering off three days of constant jerking his knot. He drove wildly, nearly side swiping several cars and pulled up to Brew & Buzz so on edge he was shaking. Will pushed past the line, running to the front in spite of several people calling out to him, and found Bev smirking at the counter.

“There he is! I knew you’d show up.”

“Don’t you EVER pull that shit on me again! I…”

“It’s you.”

He turned, frozen as he saw Hannibal standing not a foot away looking a lot less put together than he had been before.

“I…”

Hannibal walked up and pulled Will’s shirt to bring him close before sniffing his neck.

“I’ve pleasured myself for days to the memory of you,” Hannibal whispered, “I was certain I was in heat but…no it’s not that. It’s something more, something…”

Will groaned. “I went into two ruts over you,” he whispered, making Hannibal pull back to stare in his eyes.

“Did you really?”

“Y…yeah.”

He touched Will’s cheek. “Your name?”

“Will,” he said, “Will Graham.”

Hannibal smiled. “Hello Will.”

“Hi Hannibal.”

“It seems unfair that you’ve known my name all this time and I didn’t know yours.”

“I’m sorry I just…”

Hannibal sniffed his neck again and to Will’s delight scented his cheek.

“Would you like to have coffee with me, Will?”

“Yes.”

“And after,” he said, lips so close they brushed Will’s ear, “Would you like to knot me?”

He let out a long breath. “I…I’m not sure I…”

Hannibal lifted his head up and frowned.

“Why?”

“We just met, and I’m not…”

He cocked his head to the side, assessing Will, and then smiled. “You’re old fashioned,” he said, “I see. Well, I suppose that will be new for me.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Why?”

“I’m sure you…”

Hannibal smiled. “We’ve only just met, Will. How can you be sure of anything about me?”

Will blushed, shaking his head, and Hannibal took his hand making him blush even harder.

“I believe we can start with coffee for now, but…my heat is soon and I do not want to spend it with anyone else.”

Will swallowed past the lump in his throat and nodded. “Coffee for now and…everything else later?”

Hannibal’s smile widened.

“That sounds good to me.”

Day 10: Space Academy

Will Graham laid back in his bed and sighed, rubbing his eyes as the alarm continued to blare.

"Shit," he groaned, "Abigail, alarm off."

A voice echoed in the room. "Alarm off. Good morning, Will."

"Good morning, Abigail."

He got up, dragging his feet to the refresher and got under the quick spray. It wasn't much of a morning cleanse, but it was enough, and he quickly got dressed to join the other students in the main area.

Will was in his third year at Wolf Trap Space Academy, training in mind therapy and extraterrestrial interaction. He hadn't been too thrilled at either major but upon his mind sweep that was what was chosen.

Mostly because Will, of all two hundred current students at the academy, was the only one who could read minds.

His father had always kept Will from telling people his gifts, mostly out of fear, but the mind sweep at least picked up on parts of it. They hadn't come and dragged him off for any sort of 'testing' like his father warned him of when he applied to the academy out of school, but still the fear made it easier to just steer clear of his fellow students.

It was lonely, the past two years, with no one to talk with, but he managed.

Will walked into the main area and a few people stared but no one offered him a seat so he sat in the front with no one else nearby.

Captain Jack Crawford was coming to speak today, and there were rumors that he was even thinking about taking on young recruits for a one time mission. Will was eager to get away, not having to hide as much, but he didn't expect to be chosen.

Which was why, after Captain Crawford's speech about 'reaching the skies' and 'helping bring the universe together' Will was surprised when he ended up being asked to stay behind with about ten more students.

Beverly Katz was one, she worked in medical technology with her close friends Brian Zeller and Jimmy Price. Also asked to stay was Matthew Brown, who was a communications major and biological interpretation but Will thought that was only because he could talk his way out of anything and was a little too interested in the human body.

They were all given tests, one page, and the questions were odd.

If you were given the opportunity to cohabit with an alien lifeform would you:

1. Say no
2. Use them for your own devices
3. Teach them how to exist on Earth

There were plenty of aliens at the academy, mostly half human from parents who found love on space missions with alien lifeforms. Will wasn't sure what this was about but he answered honestly.

Aliens had never scared him.

They were different, like him, but he stayed away from them like everyone else.

The test pages were taken back, and they were all asked to leave but as they went by a very pale young man passed them going in. A few of the students shuddered, recoiling at once, but Will only turned to look at him.

He had red eyes, and very blonde, almost white hair. His ears were pointed, but otherwise he looked human.

Will had never seen anyone more beautiful.

The young man, obviously alien, stopped at the doorway and turned to grab his hand. Will didn't move away, he didn't want to, but he blushed when the alien took his hand up to his temple.

And then Will did recoil, but not in pain.

He blushed, feeling warm all over, and the alien's thoughts hit him like a ship crashing.

The alien, Ha'nnbal had come to be educated in the academy for the next few years in hopes to find a mate.

A human one.

He was the prince of Can'bal, a planet so small it only had a few thousand on its surface. Can'bal was slowly deteriorating because they were running out of one thing: food. The aliens of Can'bal were cannibals, who ate their own kind when they perished but they also ate their enemies.

Hello, Will.

Will shivered when Ha’nnbal reached out to touch his temple.

Hi

A sudden lurch broke their connection as Captain Crawford pulled Will back, and a few of the students that hadn’t run off in disgust stared at the two of them.

“I…”

“How about you both come inside, huh?” Captain Crawford said, as men ushered them in and closed the door.

“So…”

“I’d like for this young man to be my cohabitor,” Ha’nnbal said, “He is one of few who did not run and he is quite adequate in human appearance.”

“Will?”

“Is that your name?” Ha’nnbal asked, feigning surprise like he hadn’t just almost melded their minds.

Will blinked.

“Will, son, are you ok?”

He swallowed, nodding. “I’m ok, I just…it was weird.”

It wasn't, not at all, but two could play at the lying game.

Ha'nnbal smiled, and Will saw his teeth were sharp like fangs. "But still you are not running."

"Where else would I go?" Will asked, narrowing his eyes, "I just got pulled in here so it's not like…"

Captain Crawford sat them both down, and Will made sure not to be close to Ha'nnbal.

"Will, this…this is Prince Ha'nnbal of the Can'bal planet. He's looking for a human mate among your fellow classmates to cement a bond between our planets. We'd like you to show him around."

Will looked at Ha'nnbal, who had yet to look away from him.

You are not afraid of me.

Will licked his lips. *Do you want me to be?*

No, I do not. I find you utterly fascinating, hiding your gifts away that could bring you fame and fortune among the humans for fear. You should not fear them, Will. They should fear you.

Will felt oddly complimented and looked away, blushing.

I don't really find you all that interesting.

You will.

He met Ha’nnbal’s eyes, and it felt like he could fall into them.

“Will?”

Will shook himself, forcing a smile, and nodded to Captain Crawford. “I…it’s fine, if he stays with me.”

Captain Crawford patted his shoulder. “Good man,” he said, “This will, of course, put you up in the rank list and could even get you on a ship faster. So, we’ll be watching. Your things are already being taken to a bigger room, don’t worry about that, and this will begin immediately.”

“What? I…”

Ha’nnbal reached out to touch Will’s cheek again and he could not help but blush again.

I look forward to sharing space with you, Will.

Will didn’t answer, but their minds were so closely tied now he knew Ha’nnbal didn’t need him to say anything at all.

He didn’t fear Ha’nnbal.

But in the months to come, he would realize that maybe he should have.

Day 11: Twisted Fairy Tale

Chapter Summary

TW: omegaverse

Omega Will/Alpha Hannibal

“I still can’t believe I’m here!”

The giggled exclamation made Will turn, frowning as he watched the dance floor where among the couples, was the one everyone wanted.

Alpha Prince Hannibal Lecter

This ball was his, of course, an invitation only event for the prince to find a mate among the commoners or so the invites said.

Will wasn’t so sure.

There were many types of second genders around them: alpha, omega, beta - which was odd because the future king would need an heir.

Why would they invite alphas and betas?

He sipped his punch, watching Hannibal dance around with his eleventh partner of the evening: Fredericka Lounds. Fredericka was daughter to the Duke and Duchess Lounds, but Will had seen her among the less than reputable near his part of town. She was not what she appeared to be, and the thought of her becoming Hannibal’s mate made him so angry he gripped his cup so tight his hand was red.

The night would end at midnight, less than a quarter hour from now, and he knew when Prince Hannibal's head fell back in laughter he would not get his chance for a dance.

Will scoffed, tears stinging his eyes, and rushed out of the ballroom to the back gardens. No one was out here, thankfully, and as he sat down on the marble stairs he hit his threadbare dress clothes in fury.

What a joke.

Why had he come at all, knowing he'd be overlooked?

He knew why, but it was so pathetic he could cry.

A loud click as the door opened behind him made Will wipe his eyes but not turn.

"It's a lovely night, is it not?"

"For you, perhaps," he mumbled, frowning.

"Not for you?"

"I've watched the alpha of my dreams dance with everyone here but me, and I know without a doubt of anything, that he will pick anyone other than the poor stablehand's omega son. I have not had a lovely night knowing this."

"I see."

He sniffled, tears stinging, and wished he had a handkerchief.

Then one appeared at his side.

Will looked up, ready to give thanks, and froze.

It was Prince Hannibal.

He could do little more than gawk.

“Are you alright? Do you not need the handkerchief?”

Will shook himself, taking it, and blushing hard. “Thank you, I,” he wiped his nose, “Am glad my evening will now end in the worst humiliation possible.”

Hannibal sat down beside him, and he shivered, smelling him near.

He had not smelled the alpha for nearly a decade, but now this close he realized how much stronger his scent had gotten.

“Not the worst,” Hannibal teased, “Ms. Lounds fell on her skirt after our dance and had drinks spilled upon her head falling into several others. I believe *that* was the worst.”

Will giggled, covering his mouth, and blushed when he found Hannibal smiling.

“I…I should not laugh.”

“And yet you did.”

He smiled. “I did, yes.”

Hannibal looked at him closer, his red eyes still so lovely that Will could get lost in them, and he stopped short of touching Will’s cheek.

“I’m sorry if I didn’t see you,” Hannibal said, his smile fading, “This type of…event…makes it hard to see those who do not want to be seen.”

Will looked away, frowning. “I never said I didn’t want to be seen.”

“And yet,” Hannibal said, his fingers brushing Will’s on the step, “You hid among the crowd not throwing yourself in my face as the others. Why?”

He let out a long breath, tears stinging, and whispered a secret he’d kept for nearly half his life.

“We’ve met before,” he said, not looking at Hannibal.

“Have we? I believe if we had, I would have remembered.”

“You,” Will sighed, “It was a parade, after you…defeated the Verger army. I saw you, high up on your steed and looking like the perfect alpha, and…I…I presented.”

Hannibal turned his cheek, eyes lit. “You presented just from seeing me?”

“Yes,” Will said, his voice shaking, “My father dragged me off and I had my first heat at fourteen. I…I’ve thought of you for every heat since.”

Hannibal ran his thumb across Will’s cheek. “That is…quite the declaration. You could be lying.”

“I could be.”

“But I believe you,” Hannibal said, his fingers brushing Will’s lips. “And I…I would like you to do something for me.”

Will purred, covering his mouth in surprise.

Hannibal smiled, pulling his hand away. “Do not hide your purr, Mister…”

“Graham,” he said, his voice thick, “Will Graham.”

“Do not hide your purr, Will, I…I could die happy hearing only it for all of eternity.”

Will blushed. “What…do you want of me?”

He pulled his hand back and sighed. “Perhaps, I should not ask.”

“No, no,” Will said, grabbing his wrist, “Please, your highness…”

“Do not call me such things,” Hannibal said, “Not you, Will. Please.”

“Hannibal,” he breathed, “Ask me and I will do whatever you wish me to.”

He smiled. “Anything?”

“Yes.”

“And you would want nothing in return?”

Will swallowed back the bitterness in his throat. “Nothing, Hannibal. I would ask nothing.”

“Even if I asked you to hurt someone?

Will froze. “What?”

Hannibal took Will’s hand to his lips, red eyes lit, and stared deeply into Will’s eyes.

“Would you do what I ask then, Will?”

He was shaking as he inhaled deeply Hannibal’s scent, and the slick that slid down his backside was overwhelming. “I…I would.”

“Will….”

“I would do anything for you, Alpha,” he confessed, tears in his eyes, “Anything you asked of me.”

Hannibal turned Will’s hand over and scented his palm, making Will purr loudly.

“Fredericka,” he said, “I want you to harm her for me.”

Will’s anger from what felt like a lifetime ago resurfaced as his lip curled.

“Yes.”

“Even if I asked you to kill her?”

He did not hesitate. “Yes.”

“Would you….kill as many other omegas as you could if I told you the last one standing would be my mate?”

Will felt tears fill his eyes. “Yes, Alpha.”

Hannibal put both hands on his cheeks and leaned in so close Will could feel breath on his face.

“How would you kill them, Will?”

“W…with my hands,” he said, purring, “I would…tear them apart.”

He growled, his fingers brushing Will’s cheeks. “You please me, Will, very much.”

“Alpha…”

“I will now go inside and select fifteen others then send everyone else home. My parents already know my plans, and support them. Those who refuse, of course, will be executed along with an alpha or beta.”

Will frowned. “Why?”

“Do you think I want those outside of the event to know what happened to the chosen who do not return? I will tell their families that they ‘ran off’ with those taken and have no idea of their return. No one will know, other than the one who survives, what happened tonight. No one. Will you be that someone, Will?”

He should've run.

He could've begged for his life, running inside to warn everyone, and helped as many escape as possible.

But no.

Will instead threw himself at Hannibal, pressing their lips together, and felt a full body shudder go through him when Hannibal pulled him closer. They parted for breath, eyes both lit, and the tears in Hannibal's were genuine.

He knew they were.

"Yes."

Hannibal smiled. "I certainly hope so."

Will stepped back and watched him go, his backside wet with slick that he was sure would not die dry on his corpse.

He would win.

And he'd marry Hannibal.

No matter how many had to die.

Day 12: Candyman

Chapter Summary

TW: underage Will - he's 17 and older Hannibal like a millenia lol

also TW: decapitation of kids

It was universally known that the best house to go to on Halloween in Wolf Trap was the very last on Silver Lane.

The house wasn’t much of a house, really, it was bigger and fancier than all the others and had a gate that was always open even at night. Large pillars were on the front, and the two-story house almost seemed to glow in the moonlight.

Dr. Lecter always joked that the glow was “magic” to anyone who’d ask, but no one really believed it.

Still every year the kids of Wolf Trap went to Dr. Lecter’s place to get the massive amounts of candy he gave, and it was said that sometimes he even invited people inside for cake and cookies.

Will Graham had never been to Silver Lane, the ride was too far and his Dad wouldn’t let him, but when he finally saved enough money from mowing lawns in the summer he knew this was his year. He was seventeen, would be eighteen November 1st, and while this was his year to finally see Dr. Lecter’s house it was also the last year he could get candy without it looking weird.

Not that it mattered.

Everyone already thought he was weird anyway.

He told his Dad he was going out, grabbing a pillowcase and the hockey mask that he shoved in his jacket, and ignored the teasing he got about ‘being too old.’ His Dad never gave out candy on Halloween, said it was too expensive, and if they got egged Will cleaned it up every year.

But he wouldn’t think about that tonight.

Silver Lane was about an hour’s ride on his bike, or so he thought, but Will knew the ride would be worth the ache in his legs. He was going to get that candy tonight, no matter what he had to do. He drove fast, ignoring all the kids around him, and when he finally got to Silver Lane he groaned at the line almost going out to the street.

Kids of all kinds, including parents, lined up eagerly, and Will looked around for somewhere to hide his bike safely tucking it around the corner inside Lecter’s gate. He got in line, checking his phone as time passed, and when he finally got close enough to almost see the man in question he heard something devastating.

“I’m afraid I’m out of candy.”

Will’s chest ached, and tears stung his eyes.

It was stupid to be upset, he knew that, but as he heard the disappointment of everyone around him he couldn’t help it.

This had been ten years, this waiting, wondering, and hoping.

Ten years of hearing stories about how “amazing” the things Dr. Lecter gave were, and how people who’d been inside the house wouldn’t stop talking about it.

Now he’d never know.

Will got ready to turn away when he heard Dr. Lecter spoke again, louder this time.

“I apologize, everyone!” he said, his voice almost echoing, “But I am out of candy. I can, however, invite thirteen children inside for a special surprise.”

Loud cheers went through the crowd, and the line started to move again. Will was so excited, couldn’t believe his luck, and was nearly there when he saw Dr. Lecter for the first time.

He blinked, hardly able to look away, and the man’s smile made him blush.

Dr. Lecter was the best looking person he’d ever seen in his entire life.

Will had expected an old man, for sure, but the man in the doorway couldn’t be more than thirty. He had skin that was so perfect Will was sure he was a model, and his hair didn’t move in the windy October night.

“There now, come inside please, that’s it.”

His voice so close made Will blush harder, and as he got closer he was sure he’d spontaneously combust in the man’s house.

But when he heard Dr. Lecter say “thirteen” his hopes were dashed once again with just two people in front of him.

Dr. Lecter looked up and met Will’s gaze for a split second before he frowned to the crowd.

“I’m sorry but that’s all I have room for! I promise next Halloween will be even better than this one! Happy Halloween to you all!”

The disappointed sounds that came from the crowd as they dispersed for real this time was almost worse than the last, and Will was barely holding it together as he made his way to his bike. He stood there inside the gate and watched the crowd disappear for what felt like an eternity before he pulled out his phone again.

It was nearly nine.

He had time, really, to go to other houses.

But did they matter this time?

He pulled out his mask, wiping his eyes, and sighed.

No, it didn't.

Will stuffed everything back in his jacket and went to pick his bike up off grass when suddenly the gate started to close. He panicked, rushing to get his bike to the asphalt but just as he was about to jump on the gate closed right in front of him.

He cursed, staring at the high fence, and bit his lip when he looked at the closed front door.

Would Dr. Lecter be upset if he knocked?

He didn't know, but what else could he do?

Will walked his bike to the front, embarrassed as hell, and propped it up against the porch stairs before he went to the door. It was a nice door, a deep blue that when he touched it looked sparkly green. Dr. Lecter really went all out for Halloween, and it showed. He was about to knock when suddenly he heard something he'd remember for the rest of his life.

Screams.

The screams were so loud Will didn't understand why no one was running to the gate, and he was shaking with fear as he stepped away from the door. He jumped down, running to the side, and tried to find a window to look into and see what was going on.

Was it a prank?

Did Dr. Lecter have a haunted house inside?

Will climbed up, shaking so badly he could hardly get hold, and looked in to see something out of a nightmare.

Dr. Lecter was sitting at a table calmly while around him there were children frozen in chairs.

And not one of them had a head.

Will felt tears fill his eyes as he watched Dr. Lecter bite into an obvious head on a plate in front of him, his massive teeth more terrifying than any scary monster movie Will had ever seen before. He couldn't look away, frozen, as Dr. Lecter ate every single bite.

And then turned to look directly at Will with red glowing eyes.

He screamed, falling down onto his back with a groan, and tried to get up only to hear a loud growl.

"No, no, no, no…"

Will barely made it to his bike before he was grabbed from behind, and held so tightly he'd never escape.

"Well, well, well….look what we have here."

He let out a sob. "I…I won't tell anyone. I…I didn't…I didn't…"

Dr. Lecter licked his neck, sniffing, and Will's tears blurred his vision.

"Mmm…" he said, "You smell…divine. What is your name?"

"Will," he said, whimpering, "Will Graham."

Dr. Lecter turned Will in his arms and pushed him up against the nearest pillar. His red eyed expression seemed to change as he touched Will's face. "I don't recognize your scent, Will Graham."

"I…I've never…I've never been here before."

He smiled, turning Will to look out toward the other houses. "Do you see them coming? Ready to save you, Will Graham? Did you wonder why they didn't come?"

Will sobbed. "I…I…I don't…I…"

Dr. Lecter licked his neck, sniffing once again. "Because every year when they leave through the gate they forget. Every single year. They forget their children, as if they'd never given birth to them, and the following year they bring me more. But…I suppose…you didn't leave through the gate. Did you, Will?"

Will shook his head. “N….no.”

He turned Will again, and smiled with his razor sharp teeth.

“And now, you never will.”

Will screamed as he was dragged into the house, calling for help that never came.

But it was just his luck that Dr. Lecter was no longer hungry.

And he'd have a whole year to find a way to stay alive.

Day 13: Reboot/Fresh Start

August 13th was the first day of Will Graham's new life.

He was free.

Will stepped out of the courthouse with a huge smile on his face, clutching his mating dissolvement in hand, and the void of a bond in his head made him burst into tears.

His five year long nightmare was over.

He rushed to his car, shaking with relief, and turned the key turning to look beside him.

No alpha.

No eyes on him, judging and telling him what to do.

He was alone.

For the first time in five years he wasn't under his alpha's control, and when he looked up to see Matt leaving the courthouse giving him the dirtiest look ever - Will wasn't afraid.

He pulled out of the parking lot, smile so big even as tears run down his cheeks, and drove.

Just drove.

Will drove past Wolf Trap, past the empty miles of fields and broken promises, and finally when he realized he needed gas pulled into a gas station.

It was in the ritzier area, just shy of the city, and when he got out of his car he spotted a Bentley pulling up on the other side. Will opened the cap, put the nozzle in, and started to press just as the driver got out.

He froze when he smelled alpha, shaking as the man walked up, and knew he had to be giving off distress when the alpha turned to frown at him.

“Are you alright?”

Will couldn’t move, frozen as the alpha came closer, and he cried out when a hand came to his shoulder.

“I…I apologize,” the alpha said, stepping back, “You’re frightened *because* of me?”

He didn’t speak as the alpha looked him over, like he was assessing damage, and then stopped when his gaze came to Will’s neck. “A broken bond,” he said, “I see. Well,” he sighed, pulling out a business card, “If you’re ever in need of some counseling after what you’ve endured…I’ve helped many omegas in my time. If not, I wish you the best.”

Will took the card, still unmoving as the alpha went back to his car, and when he heard his gas stop he lifted the card.

Dr. Hannibal Lecter.

An alpha psychiatrist.

He crumbled up the card, tossing it into the back seat as he paid, and got his receipt before getting back inside. Will pulled away, locking eyes with Dr. Lecter, and kept on driving.

Will didn’t need an alpha.

Any alpha.

For now, he just wanted to be free.

At last.

Day 14: Food Truck

Hannibal made the decision to move his practice into a larger area not on a whim, but on research. His clientele was still full of wealthy individuals who wanted discreet care and try as he might he had grown bored of them. He'd gotten into psychiatry mostly because working in the emergency room also grew boring and he had no plans to try another line of work.

So he moved into a more open, less private area, and clients came running despite the price.

And their psychosis came with them.

He enjoyed his new fuller, more diverse clientele, and by his second month he was ready to sign a full year lease.

Then, one afternoon in late June, the food truck came.

The truck parked itself along the side street across from the area his and several other doctors made theirs. It was a construction site, a new bank from what the signs implied, and the name of the truck was Graham's Grub.

The workers came running, their rowdiness loud enough to bother his clients as they came inside, and by the end of that week he knew Graham's Grub would not leave.

So he walked himself across the street once the crowd thinned out, and got in line. The moment someone came to the small window he froze.

Oh.

The proprietor was quite possibly the most beautiful person Hannibal ever laid eyes on. His sweaty curls that should've been completely unappealing somehow made him seem almost ethereal, and when he laughed at the woman in front of him making a joke Hannibal's heart skipped a beat.

How could he scold this heavenly creature?

No, he could not.

The woman left and Hannibal waited for the man to reappear, unsure of what he would say, which was why when he returned he froze.

"Hey, what can I getcha?"

"I…I'm…I…"

The man looked him up and down before he smiled. "You're not here for food, are you?"

Hannibal blinked. "No, I…I was going to ask if you could move your establishment but…I see you're doing quite well so I think it would be rude of me to ask such a thing."

"Move? Why?"

"My clients, I…I'm a psychiatrist, I work with them across the street there, they were unhappy to hear the crowd being so…loud…when they came. It's fine, I…"

The man frowned. "I can calm everyone down, if you want. I just get so busy when Bev isn't with me everyday, I…I get swamped and didn't realize. I apologize, honestly."

Hannibal frowned. "You're working alone?"

“Just this week and next,” the man said, “My friend usually is here to work with me but she’s on her honeymoon with her wife.”

“I see.”

He held out his hand and Hannibal took it glady, the sweat touching his skin making him shiver.

“Will Graham,” he said, smiling, “Sorry about all this. I…”

Hannibal shook his hand. “Hannibal Lecter,” he said, “I…I can help you, if you need someone.”

Will blinked. “You?”

“I…I’m very adept at cooking, and I’m certain your small menu wouldn’t be hard. Or I can take the orders and you can do the cooking. I'm more than capable, and I can move my clients for the week which will offset the noise.”

Will just stared at him, saying nothing, and someone yelled out behind him.

“Hey buddy, someone of us got a short lunch here! Move on!”

Hannibal blushed. “I apologize if I was presumptuous, I’ll leave you to your work. Have a good day, Will.”

He got out of line, feeling oddly rejected, and went back to his building to finish with patients the next few hours. Hannibal was distracted all afternoon, feeling embarrassed which was not something he was used to. Will obviously didn’t need his help, and he needed to be fine with that.

Hannibal walked Franklyn Froideveaux out, ready to be free for the weekend, and was heading back to lock up when a voice stopped him.

"Hannibal?"

He turned and was surprised to see Will standing halfway down the sidewalk looking very worn out.

"Will."

Will came over, frowning, and stopped short of being too close. "I wanted to apologize, I…I didn't really know what to say when you were so nice earlier."

"It's perfectly understandable," he said, frowning, "You don't need my help, and I was presumptuous to even offer. I understand completely and I…"

"No!" Will yelled, then blushed, "That's not it *at all* . I…I was just shocked," he laughed, rubbing the back of his neck, "You, looking all polished and… *perfect* …offering to come work in my rinky dink little food truck for a whole fucking week. It sounded like a joke."

Hannibal felt his chest tighten. "Yes I suppose it is quite comical to think I could…"

Will grabbed his arm. "That's not…I don't mean it that way. I meant that you're so perfect and fancy and I just couldn't imagine you weren't trying to make fun of me or something. Maybe it comes from so many years of the popular kids picking on me in school or something," he laughed, "Maybe I *do* need therapy, huh?"

"Therapy is not for everyone."

"No, but…" Will kept hold of his arm, "Were you serious? About what you said?"

Hannibal nodded. “Yes, I was very serious.”

Will smiled. “I’d have to show you the menu maybe sometime this weekend, and try things out. I don’t suppose I could get your number or just meet you here tomorrow or something?”

Hannibal pulled out his business card and handed it to Will, who stared down at the card not looking up.

“I’m more than happy to try things out, if that would make you more comfortable. You can call me anytime.”

Will looked up, shaking his head. “It still feels like this isn’t the real deal, but…I will. I’ll call you, and…we can meet up this weekend. Think of it as a job interview.”

Hannibal smiled, his heart skipping a beat. “I will try to win you over, Mr. Graham.”

Will blushed. “I think you already have, but…I better see how you cook first.”

“I will wow you with my skills.”

“I sure hope so. See you later, Doc. Goodnight.”

“Goodnight, Will.”

Hannibal watched him go, aching to call him back, and knew that this moment was going to change his life.

But first he had one very important thing to worry about.

What was he going to wear?

Day 15: Hanahaki Disease - A Season Four Story

The first time Hannibal coughed up petals was the morning after he and Will had sex for the first time.

He'd told himself that their rendezvous in the dark had been such because Will was still trying to process his feelings, and that in the morning their eyes would meet and everything would fall into place.

Hannibal woke up alone in his bed, sore from the previous night, and still covered in the remains of their passion. He stared at the empty pillow beside him, touching it for what felt like ages, and dragged himself to the bathroom ready to clean off.

And was struck by a sudden onslaught of coughing, followed by what felt like vomit rising up from within. He did not have time to run to the toilet, and right on the floor of his ensuite bathroom he coughed up fourteen white rose petals.

He knelt down when he felt the need go away, and picked up the first still warm to the touch.

What did this mean?

Hannibal collected all fourteen petals, put them in an almost empty aspirin bottle that he poured into another beside it, and went to take his shower. He got dressed after, feeling no ill effects, and got dressed like nothing was wrong.

He did not look up 'coughing up petals' on his tablet, nor did he panic.

Whatever the phenomena was, part of him wanted to see it through.

Hannibal walked down the hallway, petting Encephalitis as he reached the kitchen, and found Will already eating eggs and toast. Will didn't look up as he approached, and he knew that last night was something that would never happen again.

A week later he was proven wrong.

They had, for the past five years, always given into requests for the people they wanted to kill. There was never any reasoning they had to give, none at all, and when they were finished the high never got any higher.

But this one…was different.

Will put a piece of paper with the name Jerry Gold in front of him two days before they killed Mr. Gold, and Hannibal shivered as their fingers brushed. He looked up and Will didn't look away as he had for almost a week since the night they'd spent in each other's arms.

Hannibal had coughed up forty seven petals by then, a different kind everyday, and he was starting to run out of places to hide them but he didn't throw them away.

He nodded once, and looked up the name.

Mr. Gold ran a local dog fighting ring, not far from them, and he knew this particular kill was personal.

Encephalitis had been rescued from such a place what felt like ages ago, and he reached out to touch her when she nuzzled his side.

"Good girl."

They killed Mr. Gold in his basement home, cutting him piece by piece then feeding him to his dogs that they let out after. Will was overcome when they watched Mr. Gold's final

breaths, shaking, and Hannibal couldn't help but reach out to touch.

He was surprised when Will pulled him in close, their mouths inches from each other, and touched his cheek.

"Thank you."

Hannibal nodded, and had tears in his eyes when Will grabbed his hand as they left.

They drove only a mile away when Will grabbed hold of the steering wheel and pulled them over on the side of the road where he climbed into Hannibal's lap staring down at him. Not one word was spoken, just the breathless sighs and moans that followed.

Hannibal had tears in his eyes as he saw Will orgasm on his cock, rising up and stroking all the while not caring about his own pleasure. Will was shaking as he collapsed on him, nuzzling his neck, and Hannibal expected him to end things right there. But he did not.

He rode Hannibal's cock again, moaning through their kisses, and when Hannibal came it was with a whimper, tears streaming down his cheeks. Will stared at him, saying nothing, and he touched the tears.

But then it was over.

Will got off of him, awkwardly moving and nearly falling half out of the car before he fixed his clothes. Hannibal stared at his display of coldness, suddenly feeling the urge to vomit, and swallowed down the petals that wanted to come.

They drove home in silence, and Hannibal went right to his room to expel the petals that wanted to be freed.

There were almost as many this time as there had been all week.

Thirty nine.

He gathered them up and wrapped them in a towel before he sat on the floor of his bathroom.

Eighty six petals.

Hannibal did not have to search for what this phenomena was now.

Every single time he'd expelled petals it was in relation to Will's rejection, and he knew that it would not be much longer before this heartbreak killed him.

Would it be at a hundred?

Two hundred?

He showered then, face pressed against the wall, and dragged himself to bed where sudden exhaustion hit.

Hannibal was awoken the next morning by Encephalitis jumping onto his bed and licking his face. He sputtered, opening his eyes, and found Will sitting on the edge of his bed looking worried.

"Good morning, Will."

"You look like shit," Will said, grabbing Encephalitis and petting her, "Are you alright?

He sat up, wiping his eyes. "I'm fine."

“You’re obviously not, Hannibal, it’s one in the afternoon.”

Hannibal blinked.

“Is it?”

“Yeah, and you never sleep in, not…not ever.”

He smiled. “I’m happy there are things you’ve come to know about me no one else does, Will.”

“Hannibal, this isn’t funny. Are you sick?”

Hannibal got up, not caring that Will would see his nakedness as he walked toward the open bathroom door. “Last night’s events were a bit more tiring than I expected,” he lied, “I am not as young as I used to be, you know.”

“Don’t bullshit me,” Will said, grabbing his shoulder and turning him as he held a shirt in hand, “Tell me what’s going on.”

He stared at Will, really stared, and saw his eyes were bloodshot. “Will, are *you* alright? ‘

“What?” Will laughed, “I’m not the one…”

“Your eyes are bloodshot, as if you haven’t slept, and you look pale.”

Will turned away, shaking his head. “We’re not talking about me!”

“Yes, we are,” Hannibal said as Will stepped back, “You…”

He watched Will head to his dresser, open several drawers, and take out clothes for him that he soon thrust in Hannibal's arms. "Forget it," he hissed, "Put some fucking clothes on."

Hannibal frowned, stumbling a bit as he walked, and watched Will's retreat down the hallway. He stumbled, twice, and Hannibal hurriedly dressed before running to catch up to him. "Will…"

Will pushed him away, hard, and he stumbled into Will's bedroom door half open.

"WOULD YOU JUST STOP?" Will yelled, "I'm FINE! I don't…I can't…I don't want to talk about this, or I might…"

Hannibal looked behind him, and froze when he saw something strange.

There was a yellow rose petal on Will's pillow.

He walked over to the bed, shaking, and heard Will curse rushing up to throw the pillow across the room.

"GET OUT! I TOLD YOU I DON'T…"

Hannibal had tears in his eyes as he grabbed Will by the shoulders and could do little else but kiss him. Will recoiled, trying to push him away, and when he felt the influx of flowers hit his tongue he gladly let Will hit him in the face.

"WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE…"

He saw the petals, a vivid red that he'd remember for the rest of his life, hit the floor and tears streamed down his face as he stared up at Will.

“I love you.”

Will froze.

“Will, did you hear me? I said…”

Will suddenly started to cough, worse now, and Hannibal rushed to his side as he fell to his knees. “Will, do you not…”

Will glared at him. “This is cruel, even for you,” he whispered, “You…you’re not…Hannibal I *know* what kind of monster you are. I know that…that you can’t…”

Hannibal shook his head and put both hands on Will’s face. “How many?” he asked, “How many have you expelled?”

A tear fell down Will’s cheek. “Got to be almost a hundred now,” he whispered, his voice thick, “I…I looked it up, ok? I know…I know what it is and I know you can’t…give me…”

Hannibal shook his head, grabbing Will by the arm despite Will’s resistance as he brought them back to his bedroom. “What are you doing? I’m fine with it, ok? I…I just want to…I want…”

He shook his head, and collected all the petals he’d expelled so far, tossing the containers onto his bed.

“What are you doing?”

Hannibal smiled. “Showing you my love.”

“Wh…”

He emptied all the petals from the pill containers onto his bed, watching Will's reaction, and finished by throwing the folded towel in the air.

Will rushed at him, gripping the front of his shirt as he smashed their mouths together, and they fell onto the bed. He tore at Hannibal's clothes, gasping for breath, and Hannibal did the same.

"Will…"

"God you're so…you could've died!" Will yelled, pulling his shirt off.

"As could you."

"But…"

They kissed again, softer now, and he reached for Will's hardness reveling in the moan he got in return. He pulled back, staring at every expression Will made, and Will did the same, stroking him as Hannibal groaned.

"I love you," Will sighed, "I…god I love you so fucking much."

"Will," he whimpered, "I…I live and breathe for you, I…I cannot remember a time I didn't love you."

Will laughed, kissing his neck, and pressing lips to his ear. "You just have to always one up me, huh?"

He smiled. "Not always, but when it's the truth I cannot resist."

They came staring into each other's eyes, flushed cheeks and gasping breaths, and both licked their hands after smiling so wide Hannibal was sure his face would hurt tomorrow. He laid on Will's chest with a sigh, and Will pulled him in so close he could smell their combined sex, sweaty scents, and their flowers.

It was heaven.

They fell asleep after, and Hannibal woke up in the dark when Encephalitis began to bark.

"Encephalitis, it's…"

Will's whistle made him freeze, and when he was pulled into Will's embrace once more he buried his face against his neck.

"Mmm," Will sighed, "You ok?"

Hannibal smiled and laid his head on Will's shoulder in the dark.

"Yes," he sighed, "I…I am."

They fell asleep again, Will holding him so close it was like they were one person, and when he woke up the next morning he was startled to see the bed was empty beside him.

Hannibal froze.

No.

Had it all been for nothing? Will shared his thoughts of rejection, of unrequited love, and to dismiss it first hand was—

The bedroom door opened and there standing half naked in only boxer shorts, was Will holding a tray.

He frowned.

“What’s wrong?”

Hannibal smiled, shaking his head. “Nothing, Will,” he whispered, his voice shaking, “Absolutely nothing.”

Day 16: Psychological Horror

He got married because that's what normal people did.

Normal people got married and moved to fancy suburbs like Park Pleasant where everyone drove fancy cars and no one had vivid nightmares that made them want to scream.

The first week after Will and Molly moved in is when things started to happen.

First they were visited by every neighbor around them carrying homemade cakes and cookies alike. Everyone was perfect.

Especially Doctor Lecter.

Will was struck the first time he showed up at their home carrying.a chocolate cake and wearing the most ridiculous suit that somehow made him look like he'd been made to wear it. His smile did things to Will that it shouldn't.

Things like get so horny he had anal sex with his wife not an hour after he left the house, pressing her against the counter with his eyes shut tight.

He felt guilty about it after, and bought her a new dog that she named Sprinkles.

Sprinkles was the dog he found with Molly's body not a month later.

But that was later.

Will started to fixate on Doctor Lecter, their next door neighbor who sunbathed nude all the time and often swam in the tightest speedo known to mankind. He'd go outside to tend the garden when he saw him out there, sneaking peeks that later inspired him to ask Molly to peg him for the first time.

His eyes were always shut during sex with his wife after he met Hannibal.

Later Will would realize his eyes were always shut when it came to Hannibal.

By then it was too late.

And there were too many bodies.

But that was later.

Much, much later.

Day 17: Annoying Neighbor

Will woke up to the dogs barking loudly and groaned, rolling out of bed and barely able to see as he walked to the backdoor by memory. He opened to let all seven of his dogs outside, their eager barks almost worse than the whined ones that woke him, and he sighed as he rubbed his eyes.

He sat on the porch and watched the dogs, smiling as they chased each other, and when he saw Winston get close to the fence with a ball he swore.

“Winston, no!”

The ball hit the chain link fence and got stuck, which only made the newest member of his pack dig to retrieve it.

A loud bang made Will flinch as he ran over, grabbing Winston’s collar to pull him back just as Mister Sanderson came marching out of his house. Sanderson had been a thorn in Will’s side for as long as he could remember - going on four years now - and he absolutely *hated* Will’s dogs.

“GRAHAM! I SAW THAT! YOU KEEP THAT MANGY MUTT OUT OF MY YARD!”

Will sighed as the other dogs whined, moving back away from the fence, and it made Will’s blood run cold how scared they were.

Like Sanderson had done something to them when he wasn’t watching.

“They weren’t in your yard, Mister Sanderson,” Will said, his voice shaking, “The ball just __”

The older man leaned over the fence, his deep wrinkles like cracks in his skin, and he waved his finger out while pointing to the grass.

"Don't play dumb with me, *boy* ," he hissed, "It's my grass and *my* yard. You keep those mutts away or…"

"Or what?" Will said, his voice hard, "What will you do?"

"What I have to," Sanderson said, glaring, "What I have to."

Will whistled and got the dogs to come inside, shaking with rage. He hated that old man more than anyone on Earth, and there were days when he thought of just… *no* .

No, he'd never do that.

He fed the dogs, giving them extra for having to deal with his terrible neighbor, and went to take a shower. It was the weekend, sure, but this past week had been rough to say the least. His job teaching at Quantico was mostly routine most days but he'd taken up consulting on murder cases for Jack Crawford and the FBI. The latest, a series of murders of young women was weighing hard on him because he couldn't quite get it right.

But he didn't want to think about that now.

Will got out of the shower, dressed, and made himself eggs and sausage before sitting down for breakfast just as his doorbell rang.

He frowned, checking the time, and saw it was barely eight.

Who would come this early?

He checked his phone again and saw no missed calls from Jack or anyone else. Will wasn't very social, so it had to be a stranger, and when he got to the door he peeked out but couldn't see much.

So he opened it.

And there, standing on his porch, was the most handsome man he'd ever seen. The man was wearing a powder blue dress shirt, khaki pants, and no tie but seemed underdressed even in the July heat.

Will froze, blinking, and the stranger smiled.

"Good morning."

He licked his lips. "I…um…mornin'," he said, blushing, "I…can I help you?"

The man held out a plate of cookies, neatly wrapped, and pointed just to the left. "I've been coming to meet all my new neighbors, but you've been absent every time I came to call."

Will frowned. "Neighbors?"

"I live just…over there."

He sighed. "You're Mr. Sanderson's *other* neighbor."

The man frowned, his friendly demeanor darkening. "Yes, he is…a rather…unpleasant…fellow."

"To say the least," Will said, laughing nervously, "I…" he took the cookies, "Thanks for this, I've been busy with work so I only caught the for sale sign coming down and the movers a few weeks ago. I…Lecter, right? I think that's what I heard Mrs. Talbot say."

Mrs. Talbot was Will's *favorite* neighbor, who lived just two doors from Lecter's place. She was always so good to his dogs, and never failed to try to invite him in.

Lecter held out his hand, and Will took it. "Dr. Hannibal Lecter," he all but purred, "And you are?"

"Will Graham," he said, biting his lip nervously, "I…"

Before he could finish Winston and Harley popped their little noses out the door, and he groaned, dropping Hannibal's hand before whistling to get them back inside. "LAY DOWN!"

"I see you have multiple canines."

"I…yeah, seven."

Hannibal blinked. "Seven?"

"Yeah, I…BUSTER NO!" he yelled, "I…I gotta go, Dr. Lecter. It was nice meeting you, and thanks for the cookies but…"

"Hannibal," he was corrected, "Please call me Hannibal, Mr. Graham."

Will smiled. "Hannibal," he said, "Will, you…you should call me Will."

"Will," Hannibal said, smiling, "I hope to see you again soon. This was…"

“GET AWAY FROM MY YARD!”

They both turned as Mister Sanderson ran out his front door holding a broom going after some little boys on bikes. Will sighed. “Someday that old man will get what’s coming to him.”

“Oh yes,” Hannibal said, stepping back, “I’m certain he will. Have a good day, Will.”

“I…” Will said, licking his lips, “You too.”

Will closed his door, ushering the dogs to their beds before running to stare out the closest window. He saw Hannibal heading back toward his own house, not bothering to give Mr. Sanderson the time of day, and he sighed with a hand on the window sill.

“Hannibal.”

The name rolled off Will’s tongue like it was meant to be said by him, and he found himself for the first time jealous of his annoying neighbor. Sanderson was Hannibal’s neighbor, and Will had to be stuck on the other side.

But hey they both shared the old man, so…that was one thing they had in common.

He blushed, shaking his head, and headed back to his bed with a sigh.

Who was he kidding?

Hannibal was so out of his league he’d probably never see him again.

Will grabbed a cookie and took a bite, groaning at the taste.

“Fuck, that’s amazing.”

Maybe he could bring the plate back tomorrow as an excuse.

Will laughed, taking another bite.

This was the last thing he’d expected today.

But maybe that was a good thing.

Day 18: Theatre

Every month Hannibal took himself out for the evening.

He didn't go to his usual haunts: no operas, expensive restaurants, or even the symphony.

No.

Hannibal went to the movie theater.

His local theater, Cineplex 13, showed a different play or opera event every month that rarely drew many. He'd been the only one in the theater to watch La Traviata, which had almost felt like being in Florence for the real event save for the sticky seats. Hannibal always bought himself water and nothing else, sitting in the seats while he was immersed in the music.

This month they were playing Hamlet, which may draw a crowd but he'd made sure to get a good seat and so far there were only two others in there with him. He parked outside, happy to see so few cars, and headed in to print his ticket before grabbing a water bottle. The man working the counter had his back turned when he walked up, standing behind a woman obviously ordering popcorn, and when the theater worker turned around he froze.

The young man behind the counter was the most beautiful person he'd ever seen in his entire life. He smiled, handing the woman her popcorn, and she said something that made him laugh. Hannibal's heart skipped a beat, and when the woman left he found himself at a loss for words.

"What can I get you?" the young man, whose nametag read WILL, asked.

He swallowed, letting out a breath before he smiled. "A bottle of water, please," he asked.

“That’s all?” Will asked, “We got a lot here.”

“I…I’m unsure if I’d enjoy anything among what’s offered. Do you have a recommendation?”

Will blinked and looked as if he’d never been asked such a question. “Um, I guess the pretzel bites? If you like pretzels and cheese, of course, I…”

Hannibal fully knew he would not let a single bit of the ‘pretzel bites’ touch his tongue, and yet he said, “Pretzel bites, please along with the water,” anyway.

Will came back with both, and said he owed a little over ten dollars for both. Hannibal saw a tip jar against the cash register and put in a fifty dollar bill before he left. Hopefully it would go to Will, or at the very least, part of it would. He threw the pretzel bites away the minute he got to his theater and headed inside where he spent nearly three hours immersed in Hamlet. The crowd was sparse, which surprised him, and when he left he couldn’t help but look over to see Will once more.

There was a crowd now, and Will seemed a bit overworked but he still looked quite handsome. Hannibal tried not to linger and left, thinking he may not see Will for quite some time.

But something made him go back the very next day at the very same time.

There were no showings of Hamlet or anything that wasn’t a film he knew he’d abhor but he bought a ticket to “Fury Forever” some horrible car chase themed monstrosity heading up to the snack counter in hopes to see Will.

He was disappointed to not see Will and bought his same water, heading for the theater.

Perhaps Will didn’t work often, which would prove difficult if he wanted to see him. He was halfway there when he spotted someone coming out of the theater beside his with a broom in

hand laughing with a young woman.

Will.

He had different jobs, of course he did, and that meant Hannibal may not see him always at the counter. Hannibal paused, watching, and when Will parted ways with his coworker noticing him he froze.

“Hey,” Will said, “Back already?”

Hannibal smiled. “I…I suppose I had thought of broadening my palette.”

Will laughed, and looked over at the theater. “Fury Forever?” he laughed, “I didn’t think that would be your thing.”

“It…isn’t,” Hannibal admitted, “I wanted to see a film but the others…”

Will grinned. “I’d recommend, “Splatter,” he said, “It’s only a few theaters down and…it starts in five minutes.”

“I thought it was against the rules to go into a theater not your own.”

“It is,” Will said, “But I won’t tell if you won’t.”

“Are the seats not hand picked?”

Will frowned. “True, I…hey come back with me to the front.”

Hannibal frowned. “But…”

“C’mon.”

Hannibal followed, unsure why, and Will brought him to a kiosk where he pressed some buttons and a seating chart popped up. It was barely full, as it was still mid-morning, and he looked up at Will. “Is this…”

“Pick one,” Will said, “I’ll just say you wanted yours refunded, it’s fine.”

Hannibal smiled and pressed the screen. “Thank you.”

“No problem.”

“You’re rather adept at the system for someone who’s worked here a short time.”

Will smiled, blushing. “It’s not that hard,” he said, grabbing the printed ticket that he tore, “All set. Enjoy.”

Their fingers brushed when Hannibal grabbed the ticket, and he licked his lips. “If I don’t…I know just who to complain to.”

Will laughed. “I’ll be here.”

He headed for the Splatter theater, feeling warm all over, and looked back once more to see Will watching him. Will looked away, and Hannibal smiled again.

Perhaps he needed to broaden his palette even further in other ways.

And, if he was lucky, Will would help with that too.

Day 19: Spies & Assassins

299 people.

That's how many Will killed over the years.

He's never quite sure why he keeps track, he doesn't feel guilty about it or anything, but with every new contract he takes since he got into the assassin game he adds to the number.

Dr. Hannibal Lecter is number three hundred.

Will gets the assignment completely by accident, his friend Beverly gets sick and can't take it so he volunteers even though she tells him the client is an asshole. Dr. Chilton is worse than he thought he'd be, and instantly wishes he were the assignment instead but oh well. Apparently Lecter has humiliated Chilton one too many times in their "circle" and the man just wants him gone.

"He's..he's…"

"An asshole?" Will asks, writing down in his notebook.

"Yes, *that* . If I could kill him myself, I would, but the little bit of dignity I have left I'll need for the funeral. He got my fired, did I tell you that? He put in with the board and they were *this close* to taking away my license but instead asked me to step down."

Will sighs. "That's too bad, I guess. You think he's home most nights?"

"Oh yes, he's a social person but I've never heard any rumors he keeps lovers for more than a night if that. I don't think you'll have any problem just breaking in and…"

Chilton makes a motion with his finger across his neck and Will wishes again he could stab him in the eye.

“Yeah, well,” he says, closing his book, “We’ll see.”

He gets up and leaves the car before Chilton can talk to him more.

Tonight he’ll kill Lecter, get the hundred grand he’s been offered, and head out fishing for a few weeks with his dogs.

Easy as pie.

The following night turns out differently than Will expects.

He parks outside Lecter’s place to stake out for a bit, watching the street, and thinks about going in but knows it’s better to wait. Will grabs the last few fries from his fast food bag and takes the drink from his car holder when he sees Lecter’s door open.

Will checks his phone.

It’s three fifty two a.m.

Weird.

Will watches as Lecter gets into his car, and waits long enough before he follows.

Chilton must be wrong, maybe Lecter is seeing some married lady on the side or likes to cruise the local bars late. Will's confusion worsens when Lecter pulls into a gas station and parks, not getting out of his car for over an hour.

What the hell is going on?

Cars come and go, but Lecter doesn't move at all.

Until just before sunrise when a ferrari pulls in with a couple. The driver, a middle aged man with gray hair, kisses a girl young enough to be his grandkid, and she runs off toward the store while Grandpa drives off.

Lecter follows.

And that's when Will sees Hannibal Lecter murder someone for the first time.

The only reason Will pulls over is because he sees Lecter cut the guy off, and they're sitting there for what seems like ages so he starts to walk till he finds some brush.

Lecter cuts the guys throat when he tries to run, and drags the body into his car.

Will blinks.

"What the fuck?"

He doesn't call the police.

Or Chilton.

Will instead goes home and waits to see Grandpa's name in the paper.

Grandpa is Keith Gruber, local minister, and he's missing. No one knows Keith has anything other than a kind old man. Will puts down the paper and smiles.

He follows Hannibal for the rest of the week after that, and sees him kill three more people.

Will is impressed by how easily he gets away with it, who clean the kills are and how fast he disappears. It's like he's done this all his life.

He dodges Chilton's calls till the end of the week till he knows he can't anymore.

"What the hell? I've been calling all week! Is it done?

"No," he says, "I need more time."

"What? The conference is in next week! I…"

"You want this done or not, Mr. Chilton?"

He sighs. "Fine, but I need it done in the next two days. Understand?"

"Yeah," Will mumbles, annoyed, "I understand just fine."

Will goes back to Lecter's again that night, and is lucky enough to see him leave again. But he doesn't go to the gas station. He pulls over, and Will stupid idiot he is, does the same. He doesn't know why he goes over.

Curiosity?

Maybe.

“Need any help?”

Hannibal Lecter is better looking up close, polished, and wide awake at three a.m. He frowns at Will. “I’m afraid my car is…acting strange.”

“I can take a look?”

“Would you?”

“Sure, pop the hood.”

Will waits and goes to look, not really seeing much, and moves to tell him that but is caught by surprise when Lecter grabs him from behind putting a knife to his neck.

“Who are you and why have you been following me?”

He lets out a long breath. “You knew.”

“Of course I knew,” Lecter says, tightening his hold, “I wouldn’t be so reckless if I thought you a threat.”

Will laughs. “I *am* a threat,” he says, “Or I’m known to be one.”

He tightens his hold more, and Will struggles to breathe. “Are you going to answer me or should I just kill you?”

“Chilton,” Will says, coughing when he’s let go, “He…he paid me to kill you.”

Lecter looks at him oddly. “If you’re going to lie to me…”

“No!” he says, holding up his hands, “It’s the god’s honest truth. He’s paying me a hundred grand to kill you.”

“And yet you haven’t.”

“No,” Will says, standing as he backs up, “I haven’t.”

They stare at each other. “Why?”

“I don’t know,” Will says, blushing as he scratches the back of his neck, “I just…I got…when I saw you kill the first one I just kept watching. You’re masterful, Lecter, and I’m sure you know it.”

The smile he gets makes Will’s heart skip a beat. “Thank you, I…I haven’t seen you kill anyone but I’m certain other than this circumstance you do it well.”

Will laughs. “Yeah, I…I do.”

Lecter closes the car’s hood and leans against it, as does Will.

“So…what now, Lecter? Still think you want to kill me?”

“Are you going to kill me, Mister…”

‘Will,” he says, not sure why he gives his real name, “Will.”

“Will,” Lecter says, holding out his hand, “Please, call me Hannibal.”

Will takes his hand and shakes. “Hannibal.”

“Will.”

He licks his lips. “You wanna see me kill someone?”

“Yes, I would like that very much.”

Will smiles. “Do you happen to know Dr. Chilton’s address?”

Hannibal’s smile widens. “I do.”

Will can’t seem to stop smiling. “Then…lead the way.”

Day 20: Space Colonization (A/B/O)

Will doesn't know why he volunteers to live on Mars.

Curiosity?

Boredom?

He's told the housing is free, experimental in nature as it is, and that he'll have time before he's introduced to the locals and chosen.

For mating.

The aliens only showed themselves about five years ago, and some of them live on Earth but a majority brought omega humans back to Mars for mating purposes. There have been about a thousand who've been sent there and the number is growing.

He thought hard about volunteering the last few years of terrible dating history - alphas, omega, and betas alike - and now he finally decided to volunteer in his last few fertile years. If he's not chosen at all, which is likely, he'll still get to stay so there's no downside.

But when he finally gets there and sees the competition, he's terrified he's made a huge mistake.

The other omegas are friendly, gorgeous, and almost a decade younger than him.

Who would want him?

What if he ends up all alone on a strange planet with nothing but a strange sky to look at and terrible internet reception?

Will gets off the plane shuttle last, lingering as he takes his regulation three luggage, and is instantly given a house. Mars is breathable with nose aerators that are comfortably worn and look almost like nose rings in the right light. He takes another shuttle to his new home, staring out at the happy couples and children around him.

This was a terrible idea.

His house is a little larger than those tiny houses he used to see on HGTV but it's nice enough and surprisingly the internet is super great here. He goes to bed that night feeling better when an invite to a mixer is put in his inbox.

He's sure to meet someone tomorrow.

Will puts his headphones on to block out the shuttle noises and hears the sound of the Supreme Leader - Hnb'al, who it said in the brochures was a fair but stern leader - who wishes all new omega visitors to Mars a lovely rest.

And falls into a strange dream.

He's there, standing in a room filled with bodies, and beside him is a pale skinned alien with red marks on the edge of his face like all the other martians. He has a large foot in his hand, and his teeth are stained red with blood.

He hands Will the foot, and Will takes it gladly biting down.

"And now," the martian says, his voice so familiar, "We are *one* ."

Will sleeps better than ever before that first night.

But just thirty day cycles later - he’ll sleep the best he ever has - and in his mate’s arms.

Day 21: Ghosts

The first time Will Graham met Count Hannibal Lecter was in the middle of the Lounds Ball. There were several hundred other guests in attendance of varying titles, but Will was the only one there without one.

All because he'd saved a dog.

Gregor Lounds, Duke of Hambridge, was known for his love of canines. He had five of them - all of various breeds - and doted on them even more than his daughter. The dog that Will happened upon was a small breed named Wesker, a white growly little thing, and the various posters all over Wolf Trap led him in the Duke's direction.

So now, Will was among people who thought him little more than shit on their shoe.

Not one of them had spoken to him or done little more than a cursory nod at Gregor's attempts at introduction. Will found himself caring not much at all, though he was quite bored, so he went outside.

Which was where he saw a man leaning over the balcony. The man was neither tall nor short, but wore very fine clothes that almost glittered in the moonlight.

"I thought I was the only one who wanted out of there."

The man turned, looked Will over, and his sneer made the smile fade from Will's mouth.

"You are *not* ," he said, "But I was unaware that Lounds let his staff mingle among the festivities."

Will glared. “I was invited.”

“Oh? Are you the dog man? I’ve heard about that.”

He blushed. “Yes, I…Gregor was very pleased to get Wesker back unharmed.”

“Did you steal the mutt or actually happen upon him?”

Will’s eyes widened. “Are you accusing me of robbery, Sir? I never! You…you…”

The man came up to Will, clearly amused, and put one hand on his shoulder. “The very fact that you’re so affronted makes me wonder, Dog Man. It makes me wonder.”

“I would have you know that I…am a man of dignity and I would *never* think to do such a thing.”

The man’s smile widened as he stepped away. “A pity then,” he said, “That you’re the only noble man here. I would suggest you go elsewhere to finish off your evening.”

Will was at a loss for words when the man left, the night’s air making him shiver, and when he rushed inside he didn’t see him. He never saw him that night at all and he looked plenty.

No.

Will didn’t see him again until nearly a decade later when to the horror of Gregor Lounds’s only daughter, he was given the Lounds estate in the older man’s will. He knew he’d have no need for it, but when Fredericka attempted to attack him he decided to keep the home out of pure spite.

He was given the deed and the keys without question, and he locked the gate that very night after calling the constable to take Ms. Lounds away from his property.

Will sighed, rubbing his eyes as he walked through the empty house.

What was he to do with such an estate?

The bills would be paid for with a stipend by the Duke himself according to the will, so there was no worries on that end. His modest home near the edge of town was nearly a fourth of its size, and knew it was not for him.

Will sighed, running his hands across the walls of the empty front hall, and kept walking till he came upon a sight.

The ballroom.

He frowned as he remembered the sights and sounds a decade before, how out of place he'd felt, and found himself sitting in the midst of it.

"What should I do?"

Stay .

Will turned so fast he nearly hurt his neck. "Hello? Is someone there?"

There was no answer as he got lost in memory again.

His first thought was of *the man* .

Will could see him so clearly it made him frown, and he wondered just what the man was doing now.

“I regret to inform you that…”

He crawled backwards on his hands, terrified, and saw the man from the ball kneeling on the floor.

But he was not a man.

He was a ghost.

Will felt tears fill his eyes.

“I’ve gone mad.”

The man smiled. *“No, but…you’ll get there.”*

“You, you…”

The man got up and bowed, looking at Will with amusement. *“Count Hannibal Lecter,* ” he said, *“Nice to meet you at last, Will Graham.”*

“You…”

“I heard Fredericka yell your name, and watched the will reading. It was…amusing…to see everyone mourn Gregor given what the man was doing behind these doors.”

“What? I don’t…I…”

Hannibal floated over to Will, so close he could feel a chill in the air, and his smile was even more frightening close up. *"Gregor killed me, Mister Graham, and I suspect if you hadn't left that night he would've killed you too."*

He blinked.

"I…"

Hannibal's ghost sighed and knelt in front of Will. He could feel his touch, almost taste it, and knew this was not madness.

This was real.

"Where…where did…"

Hannibal frowned. *"The others, they're in the garden. I was the only one hidden in the house."*

Will let out a breath. "Others?"

"You're the first to actually see us, Will, and that means…soon we will move on."

Tears fell down Will's cheeks. "Tell me everything."

"You're certain?"

He nodded. "Yes."

“Well, it all started…because I was planning on killing Gregor myself.”

“What?”

Hannibal glared at him.

“May I finish?”

Will blushed. “Yes, I…I apologize.”

“Well then, let me…what is it they usually start stories with? Oh yes….once upon a time…”

Day 22: Yandere

The first time they met it was on a date.

Not a date together, obviously, but it was a date that Will had been set up on by Beverly Katz. His date, a rather boring woman named Cassandra, was the heir to some fortune or something but he honestly couldn't stand her within two minutes of meeting enough to pay attention. Bev thought he'd like her because she had blonde hair, blue eyes, and two dogs - that she literally brought on their date - he'd be happy to be stuck at a restaurant with prices nearly double that of anywhere Will would've gone on his own

He wanted out, desperately, but Bev was so sure they'd get along because Cassie was *just like him* , but what she really meant was she liked dogs.

Will liked dogs.

Hell, Will *loved* dogs.

But Cassie was so in love with her dogs she wouldn't talk about anything else.

"And then, Mitzi yanked off her scarf and ran!" she laughed, shaking her head as Mitzi pulled on the corner of the napkin on the edge of the table with the help of Grady, the other tiny dog and her partner in crime.

"Yeah that…that's…something."

"What do yours do? You know, I'm surprised you didn't bring any of them! Mitzi and Grady would've loved to…"

"I…I don't bring them out," he said, "It's…"

“OH MY GOD!” Cassandra said, “LOOK IT’S DOCTOR LECTER! HEY THERE! HI!”

Will turned, trying to see who she meant, and that was when he first saw Hannibal Lecter.

Hannibal was dressed in a blue checkered suit, dark blue shirt, and red tie. It was the strangest suit Will had ever seen and yet it looked right on him. He paused when Cassandra yelled, his face scrunching up to show his annoyance, and then he turned to look at Will.

And blinked.

It was a brief look, barely a look more of a glance, and when he sat down he didn’t look at them again.

Two days later Cassandra was found dead in her condo, and Will was at the crime scene.

It was a bloodbath, her chest torn open, and stuffed inside were hearts. Perfectly cut red paper hearts. Will was confused about the scene, the lack of forced entry aside it almost seemed like the killer was bored.

“Tell me what I’m seeing, Will.”

“It’s…he didn’t even want to do it,” Will said, frowning, “I don’t even think he *had* to, it’s a gesture he’s not even sure he should make yet? If that makes sense.”

“Not at all,” Jack sighed, rubbing his temple, “And the hearts?”

“Oh it’s obviously a gift for someone he’s interested in, but again he’s not sure if he should be telling them yet.”

“How do you know it’s a man?”

Will blinked. “What?”

“It could be a woman killer, or maybe they don’t even identify as either one.”

He shook his head. “No, that’s…no. It’s a man, it’s…it’s a man.”

Will didn’t know why he knew that.

He just knew.

Will left that night feeling more than tired, driving home late in a haze, and was barely paying much attention when he nearly ran over someone in the street. He veered to the left, cursing, and pulled over intending to yell.

“What the hell are you…”

He blinked.

It was Doctor Lecter, the man from the restaurant. He was covered in motor oil all over a plain tan suit, looking entirely lost, and his frown pulled at Will’s heartstrings.

“I…apologize,” he sighed, shaking his head, “My car seems to be…broken.”

Will swallowed back his rant. “Sorry I…I thought you were…can I help?”

“Please?”

And there, under the light from a cell phone, Will fixed Doctor Lecter's car. It was an easy fix, a few loose bolts and wires along with dangerously low oil, but by the time the car started he knew a few things.

Doctor Lecter's name was Hannibal.

He knew all about Cassandra.

And he was apparently a cook, in addition to being a doctor.

Hannibal invited Will to his home for dinner as a thank you, and when Will drove away he had Hannibal's number and address for the next evening.

Will had never been more excited for dinner, and along the way he stopped at a gas station to get some wine. It was a bad place for it, he knew, but Buster got sick just before he'd been getting ready and threw up all over his gray suit so now he was stuck in a blue one with a plain dress shirt but no tie. He didn't have enough time to go to a real liquor store.

The clerk at the gas station, a dark haired young man named Steve, rang him up for the wine and gas.

"Going somewhere special tonight or just drinking alone?" he asked.

Will smiled. "Dinner, I…I fixed someone's car and they're repaying me."

Steve looked at Will a bit longer than just friendly, and his eyes lingered on Will's mouth.

"Well, if it's just a friendly thing I'm always here," he said, "If you're ever looking for someone to…share a night with."

Will was a little flattered that someone at least a decade younger than him was so blatantly flirting. He laughed nervously, paying in cash and leaving a five in the tip jar.

He told Hannibal about Steve at dinner later, and the look on his face was confusing.

“He just…openly flirted with you after you said you were having dinner with someone?”

“Yeah,” he laughed, taking a bite of his steak, “Wild, huh?”

Hannibal frowned. “Yes, I suppose so.”

Will felt like he’d said the wrong thing, and tried to joke about it again but Hannibal changed the subject. He didn’t expect to ever think about Steve again, and when he went back to Hannibal’s for dinner two weeks later there was someone knew working there anyway.

“Where’s Steve?” he joked, making the girl behind the counter frown.

“Is that supposed to be funny?”

“What? I…”

“Steve’s been missing for weeks,” she said, tears in her eyes, “He…he was the nicest guy you could ever meet and you…you know what, *fuck off*. ”

She pushed Will’s receipt at him, and he frowned.

Missing?

Weird.

Will went to Hannibal's that night feeling weird, but dinner ended up being a surprise.

Steak.

He hadn't had a good steak in ages.

"This is amazing," he moaned, biting into the tender perfection, "I honestly don't think I've ever eaten a steak this good."

"Thank you, Will."

"I…"

His phone went off, and he paused checking his dog cameras.

And found they were all suddenly off.

"Shit," he said, "I gotta…how the hell?"

"What is it?"

"I have cameras," he said, setting down his knife, "They're in the house for the dogs but…the power must've gone out or something? I…I have to get back. It's been hours."

"But…dinner?"

“I’m sorry, Hannibal, I just…I can’t leave them alone.”

“I understand. Let me show you out.”

Will apologized profusely, feeling like an ass, and ran to his car that suddenly wouldn’t start.

“Damnitt!”

He tried multiple times, cursing, and even popped the hood but found nothing wrong. “What the hell?”

A knock at his window made Will pause, and he rolled it down to see Hannibal frowning. “What’s wrong?”

“It’s not starting, I…I don’t know how that happened.”

“I can drive you, if you’d like? Just to check on your canines and then bring you back to tow your vehicle in the morning?”

“I don’t want to put you out, but—if the power is out, or worse I have to be sure they’re ok.”

“Of course.”

It started to rain on the ride to Will’s house, and he found himself staring at Hannibal more than he ever had before. They’d been friendly the last few weeks, and he felt more comfortable around him than anyone.

“...and I’ve always thought that driving was a soothing event, especially on nights like this.”

Will blinked, licking his lips. “Yeah?”

“Oh yes.”

He blushed, not sure why, and pulled up his phone again but got no signal.

“Will?”

“I hope nothing’s wrong.”

“I’m sure it’ll be fine. You’ll see.”

The drive took an hour and they talked the whole ride there, about random shit like books and even just life. Will found himself feeling better as they pulled up to the house but instantly his fear kicked in as he jumped out even before Hannibal parked.

He unlocked the door, and found the dogs just fine.

Will got down on his knees as they swarmed him, and laughed at the slobbery dog kisses.

“I see I was correct.”

He turned to see Hannibal half in and half out, the rain hitting the wood floor. “Come in, you’ll get all wet.”

Hannibal shut the door, and Will heard his footsteps behind him as they let the dogs out together. They sat on the porch as the dogs ran in the rain.

“Will there be too much mud on them?”

“Yeah, probably,” Will said, smiling, “It’s ok I’m used to it.”

“I see,” Hannibal said, “Well, I suppose—”

He turned. “Want a cup of coffee or a glass of wine before you go?”

Hannibal paused. “I…yes that sounds nice.”

Will realized he’d left the bottle of wine he’d brought at Hannibal’s place, so he made them both coffee after wiping off the dogs’ paws. They sat at Will’s kitchen table for the next few hours, sharing more stories, a little darker this time, but soon he realized it was late.

“I…I suppose I should go.”

“I…I mean…it’s raining pretty hard,” Will said, “And it’s dark and it’s…there’s no one really around if something happens. You can stay the night, if you want?”

Hannibal blinked. “I…you’re certain?”

“Yeah, I…I mean I’d have to give you something to wear to bed but yeah it’s a lumpy couch but it’s ok.”

“Alright then, thank you.”

He gave Hannibal some pajama pants, and felt nervous as he went to change. Then he realized that he’d put the couch in the dogs’ area just a few days before meeting Hannibal.

“Shit.”

Hannibal came out wearing nothing but the pants, and Will was thrown by how much more attractive he was out of his normal suits. “I…um…I realized that I gave the dogs the couch so…”

Hannibal frowned. “So you have nowhere for me to sleep.”

“Yeah, I mean….there’s my bed, it’s a full, but…”

“I wouldn’t want you to be uncomfortable.”

Will blushed. “I..no, I…no, it’s fine.”

That’s how they both found themselves sharing Will’s bed while both wearing Will’s pajamas. Will was frozen stiff in the dark, unable to stop thinking about how close Hannibal was, and the storm outside raged.

“Will?”

“Yeah?”

“I…nevermind.”

“No, what is it?”

He felt Hannibal turn towards him in the bed, their arms touching, and when Hannibal took his hand his heart skipped a beat. “I…I suppose it’s unfair to do this in the dark, but…I must confess something.”

“What?”

Hannibal squeezed their hands together. “I…I have feelings for you,” he said, his voice soft, “Amorous, romantic…”

Will kissed him before he could finish, and when they parted he didn’t have to see Hannibal’s face to know he was smiling. “Me too,” he said, “I…I didn’t realize but…me too.”

“I would ask to see your face but…there’s always morning.”

“Yeah,” Will laughed, as Hannibal pulled him close.

That was the first night they became *them* , though it was also the beginning of the force of nature that was Hannibal Lecter.

Hannibal was *everywhere* after that.

Just *everywhere.*

He showed up in Jack Crawford’s office less than three days later as the psychiatrist Jack hired to help Will while they tried to find the Chesapeake Ripper.

He came to crime scenes with cookies and donuts, often just staying on the side lines.

“Your boyfriend is a little possessive, huh?” Bev asked, after Hannibal went around giving the other agents food.

He frowned. “No, he…”

“He is,” she laughed, “But maybe you like that?”

Will blushed. “No.”

He would be in the parking lot of the Try-n-Save when Will went to buy groceries if Will didn’t answer his phone fast enough. Will could see the frantic look on his face, wildness in his eyes, but didn’t think anything of it.

Hannibal was different.

That was all.

Until his jealousy began to be more obvious.

Will noticed cashiers began to act oddly toward him no matter where he went, and some of them even just up and disappeared. He would ask if something was wrong but they’d shake their heads handing him his receipt without a word.

He didn’t know then it was Hannibal.

He just thought maybe he was that bad at socializing.

Hannibal always was there to comfort him, in more ways than one, and while they got closer physically they never fully *went there* .

Not until Buster turned up missing.

Will's week had been just awful - full of mysterious deaths that Jack insisted he consult on no matter how much it messed with him - and he'd told Hannibal he had to cancel their date. Hannibal sounded less than happy but said it was fine.

So when Will got home that night he let the dogs out, intending to just lay low, maybe get a little drunk to not think for a while.

But then Buster didn't come back inside.

"Buster?"

He ushered the dogs in, eyes wide as he looked in the dark, and pulled out his phone. "BUSTER GET BACK HERE!"

Will heard a muffled bark, and got even more worried running into the woods but saw nothing. He searched for almost three hours, terrified, and finally couldn't take it anymore. He pulled out his phone, tears in his eyes, and called Hannibal.

"Will? It's very late, I…"

"Buster is missing," Will said, his voice shaking, "I let the dogs out and…"

"I'm sure he's close, Will, your pack never goes far. They're too…"

"HE'S NOT HERE IT'S BEEN HOURS! I…I *need you* , Hannibal. I…"

"I will be there as soon as I can."

He ended the call, still running, and fell to his knees covering his face. Buster had been his first stray. The very first. Will couldn't remember his life without him.

Will didn't know how long he sat there, lost in his worry, when he heard the car door slam he turned toward the light at the back of his house running toward his yard.

Only to hear barking.

He let out a sob, running faster, and found Hannibal standing at his gate with Buster muddy in his arms.

"I found him wandering near the road, I…"

Will kissed him then, couldn't not, and took Buster laughing as they headed for the house.

"Where were you, boy? Huh? I was so scared! You're lucky Hannibal found you or you'd be toast!"

Buster licked him, and he smelled like Hannibal's cologne even after only being with him for a short time.

"I'm glad everything worked out. I should…"

"Stay?" Will asked, tears in his eyes.

Hannibal frowned. "I wouldn't want to impose."

"Never, you…never."

They were in bed together less than an hour later. Will stared up at him, panting for breath, and clutched hard as Hannibal fucked him in a frenzy. He screamed when he came, making the dogs howl, and Hannibal bit marks all over his neck but he didn't care.

He should've.

Cared.

But he didn't know.

He just…didn't know.

Not then.

Not like…he does now.

Day 23: Infinite Loop

The first time Will sees Hannibal it's just before he jams a knife into his heart. It's a shock, truly, and as his life leaves him he wonders just who the hell just killed him.

He wakes up alive, untouched, and thinks it's just a dream.

Except it happens again.

And again.

And again.

Day Three Will is ready for him, waiting up all night for the random serial killer to break into his house. It's a narrow win that night, fighting for his life, but this is when he gets a name.

"Who…are…you?" he gasps, staring as the man whose face he knows Will haunt his nightmares if he gets out of his alive smiles.

"I suppose I should let you know now since you won't be able to tell anyone," the man says, sitting on the floor beside Will's body as he bleeds out, "My name is Hannibal Lecter, and just yesterday you opened your car door into mine leaving a scratch that took two hundred and twenty five dollars to get repaired."

Will laughs just before he dies this time, ready to come back, and the very first thing he does is google 'Hannibal Lecter.'

Dr. Hannibal Lecter is a psychiatrist of some renown, and according to the deep dive Will goes on has no priors or even a single speeding ticket.

A squeaky clean killer hiding in plain sight.

Will books an appointment with Hannibal, wanting to see him in his element, and when the man who's killed him now three times opens the door he cannot hide his surprise as Will gave a fake name.

"Mr. Dancy," he says, "Please come in."

He does, looking around, and sits down on the little couch with a sigh.

"If I could have your insurance informa—"

"I'm paying cash," Will says, frowning, "Do you not take cash?"

"Yes, but it will cost you."

"I don't care, I…I need your help, Dr. Lecter."

There's something there behind Lecter's eyes that Will knows he can exploit. He wants to be in control, to wind people up and watch them go.

Will can do that.

He sits down near Will's head, and takes out a notebook.

"Tell me, Hugh," he says, "Tell me what you need."

Will licks his lips. “I…I keep having nightmares I’m gonna die. It’s…terrifying. Can you help me?”

Dr. Lecter smiles. “Of course I can. That’s what I’m here for, Hugh. To….help.”

They both stare into each other’s eyes, not wanting to be the first to look away, and Will can’t help but admire Lecter’s face. He’s handsome, more than Will remembers, and he can see why he’s gotten away with killing people for so long.

No one suspects a handsome monster.

“Thank you,” he says, squeezing a tear out of one eye that he feels slide down, “Thank you so much.”

Lecter’s smile doesn’t quite reach his eyes, but even Will knows he’s intrigued.

A monster who’d kill him for denting his car would love a cat and mouse game.

And Will…doesn’t plan on being the mouse this time.

Day 24: Childhood Friends

Will finds the notes tucked away in his father's drawer, hidden among his threadbare t-shirts and even older jeans.

They're addressed to Robert Graham, a name his father rarely got letters for outside of jury duty and bills.

And the return address was from Thanatos Lecter.

The minute Will opens the first he knows why they were hidden.

His father was having an affair with Thanatos Lecter, or rather…Thane. The letters are romantic, waxing poetic about how much Thane misses his father, and even at times writing dirty descriptions of what he wishes they could be doing.

Thane's letters are from Lithuania, and according to them he's married with two children. His mother had left by then, and Will always wondered why his Dad didn't remarry.

It was this.

This was why.

The letters stop abruptly after Thane tells "Robert" he's coming in to see him for a week on a trip. Will doesn't remember anything like that happening.

He goes to the computer, types in Thanatos Lecter, and what he sees makes him freeze.

Thanatos Lecter, his wife Simonetta, and their youngest daughter Mischa were all murdered.

Their son, Hannibal, is the only survivor of the massacre.

Will stares, shocked to say the least, and searches one more time.

Hannibal Lecter.

Only one name comes up, and to his surprise Hannibal isn't very far away. He's a psychiatrist, and pretty well known.

Will knows he shouldn't, it's not right to ruin a son's memory of his parents being in love, but he can't help himself when he calls the number of Dr. Lecter's office to leave a message.

"I know this is gonna sound weirdly out of the blue, but my name is Will Graham. My father just died and I found letters in his drawer from your father who I know isn't…god I shouldn't be doing this. Please call me back at…"

He ends the call, shaking, and goes back to boxing up his Dad's things.

Will doesn't look at the name when he answers his phone hours later.

"Hello?"

"Will Graham?"

He blinks. "Uh, yeah you called me so…"

“My name is Hannibal Lecter, you left a message at my office.”

Will lets out a shaky breath. “Yeah, yeah I did.”

“I think,” Hannibal says, “I may have something of interest to you. If we could meet?”

Will nods, then realizes Hannibal can’t see him. “Yeah, I…yeah we can meet. When and where?”

“I don’t suppose you’d be comfortable coming to my home?”

He frowns. “I…I mean…if you have what I think you do…”

“Your father’s name was Robert,” Hannibal says, “And he called my father names my mother never did.”

Will sighs, rubbing his eyes. “Yeah,” Will says, “Yeah I can come there. Just tell me the address and when.”

“Tomorrow,” Hannibal says, “And you’re in Wolf Trap?”

“Did you google me?”

“You did me, yes?”

He smiles. “Yeah.”

“So…”

“Yeah, I’ll be there. I’ll bring the letters.”

“I have more than letters,” Hannibal says, “I have pictures and…other things.”

Will frowns. “What other things?”

“I cannot tell you over the phone, Will, though I would ask for your discretion. I am a man of some renown. I…I wouldn’t want this to get out in the public.”

Will frowns. “What? You…are you…I’m so confused.”

“Will,” Hannibal sighs, “I assure you I’m not homophobic, as I am pansexual myself. If that’s what you were thinking. This…it’s much more than you think.”

“I read the letters.”

“Yes, but you may not have understood them.”

“Listen here, I’m not some…”

“Please,” Hannibal says, “Please come so I can explain. Please?”

He frowns, already madder than he expects. “Fine. I’ll be there.”

“Thank you. I assure you, Mr. Graham, there’s so much more beneath the surface of our fathers’ romance than you could possibly imagine.”

Will sighs. “I don’t know why you know more than I do.”

“Because my father kept a journal,” Hannibal says, “And he…he was very detailed.”

Will frowns. “Am I going to like what you’ve got to say?”

“No, you probably won’t.”

He grips the back of his neck as tears fill his eyes, and laughs shakily. “Lucky me I’ll have a shrink there to talk me through it.”

“Yes,” Hannibal says, “Lucky you.”

“Goodnight, Doc.”

“Goodnight.”

Will ends the call and goes to find the letters again. He reads them all over the next few hours, again and again, but doesn’t quite get it. So what if they spoke about their childhood friendship meeting unexpectedly when Will’s father worked stables for a year at some estate? Why was that a bad thing?

He reads till his eyes hurt, and falls asleep fast waking up the next day almost missing his afternoon meeting with Hannibal. Will dresses fast, a little messily, but doesn’t want to be rude so he rushes out.

The drive is long, a little confusing, but when he pulls up to a gate he knows he’s there.

He presses a box that buzzes without even being asked to identify himself and drives up to a house he's only read about.

Hannibal Lecter is better looking in person than the photos Will saw online, and he greets Will with a smile.

"Good afternoon."

"Hey," Will says, grabbing his bag, "I…this is it, right?"

"Yes," Hannibal says, "This is the estate where our fathers met and…fell for one another."

Will can almost feel his father in the air, and tears fill his eyes.

"He loved it here," Will says, "Your Dad I mean."

Hannibal blinks. "I never came here until I was nearly thirty," he whispers, "I only found out it existed when my Uncle Robertus passed."

Will frowns. "But…"

"Please come in," Hannibal says, "We have much to discuss."

Will follows, still confused, and they walk inside to a house that looks immaculate. He's sure Hannibal fixed up the place if it sat for so long, and sighs walking down the hallway.

"You did a good job with it."

Hannibal pauses and turns. “It was like this when I first came almost twenty years ago. My father…he had hired staff and…he never once came back.”

Will blinks. “Why?”

He gestures into a room. “Please let me explain.”

Will walks in and pauses to look at the plethora of letters strewn about the table. There has to be hundreds, way more than his Father had, and as he walks up tears fall down his cheeks.

“He…”

“He kept writing,” Hannibal says, “Your father. He…he kept writing, even after my Father was murdered.”

He reaches out to touch the letters. “Why? What…”

Hannibal opens a box on the table and hands Will a stack of pictures.

Will gasps when he sees his father, half naked and so young, smiling at the person taking the photos.

“But I thought they didn’t see each other again?”

“They didn’t,” he says, “This is from that year. They…the year they…”

Will sits down, flipping through the pictures. “That they what?”

Hannibal touches his arm and he looks up to see him frowning. “That they murdered your Grandfather.”

Will blinks.

“What?”

Hannibal sits down and pulls out a printed page handing it to Will.

His Grandpa Robert, who looked so much like his Dad, stares back at him. “Yeah, I know what my Grandfather looked like. I don’t…”

Hannibal smiles. “Our Grandfathers were the reason they couldn’t be together so they planned to rid themselves of them. Only one murder happened, because my father stopped Robert from killing my Grandfather Domantus. It devastated Robert, who left and my father married my mother but then they rekindled their romance via letters.”

Will frowns. “That wasn’t in any of the letters I have.”

“Perhaps your father is keeping more secrets than you think. I’m certain the letters would be there though they did often talk in code.”

He’s shaking as he reads Grandpa Robert’s obituary.

“How did he die?”

“They stabbed him together, and made love in the aftermath. Your father was very… descriptive.”

Will feels sick as Hannibal hands him a letter, written in his father’s handwriting.

It describes it all.

The planning.

The murder.

And their ‘celebration.’

Tears fall down his cheeks. “My father was a murderer.”

“Yes, but for good reason.”

Will laughs as Hannibal hands him a handkerchief. “What good reason is there for murder?”

“Love?” Hannibal asks, “Is that not a good reason?”

He looks at him, blushing, and then blows his nose.

“No,” he whispers, “No, it’s not.”

He reads the letter again, almost hearing it in his father’s voice, and sets it down.

“What am I supposed to do with this?” he asks, “What…what…shit.”

“Will…”

“I’m sorry,” Will says, “I…I know you’re sharing this with me and you didn’t have to. You probably never wanted to.”

Hannibal frowns. “No, I did not want to, at least not when your Father still lived.”

He looks at him. “When did you find these?”

“Nearly twenty years ago.”

“You should’ve…”

“Come to see my father’s lover? What good would that have done?”

Will shakes his head. “I don’t know, I just…god he was so sad, all the time. I never…I never thought…”

“Yes, my father was…sad…at times as well but he was happy at others. I didn’t know him quite as long as you did yours though, I suppose.”

Will turns to look at him. “Shit, I’m sorry. I forgot you…god I can’t imagine what you went through.”

Hannibal shakes his head and gets up. “Do not apologize, it’s not your place to know. I… would you like some wine? I’ve made a charcuterie board for us to share if you’re hungry.”

Will nearly laughs but stops himself, just smiling. “I guess I could eat. Though your dining room table is occupied.”

“Yes, I suppose. The kitchen?”

“Sure.”

He follows Hannibal to the kitchen, and sees all modern appliances when they head inside.

“You did remodel.”

“Yes, I…I enjoy the culinary arts and didn’t want to deal with outdated models.”

“Yeah I get it.”

He sits Will at the counter on a stool, and pulls out the board between them while handing Will a wine glass.

“Thanks.”

They both drink, eating a little, and he starts to feel a bit better.

“You said you had other things,” Will says, “Did you just mean the pictures?”

Hannibal shakes his head. “No, I…I found my father’s sketchbook just a few years ago. It’s filled with pictures of your father inside.”

Will’s chest aches. “Can I see it?”

“Yes, of course. I can get it now?”

“No,” Will says, shaking his head, “For now let’s not think about them. I feel like my head might explode.”

Hannibal nods. “Of course. I…I don’t suppose you’d like to stay for lunch?”

Will smiles. “How much stuff do you have, Doc?”

Hannibal smiles. “Not more than that, but…I thought you might like to tour the estate and see some of the places mentioned up close. And we’d each get a chance to read the letters in

order.”

Will nods. “Yeah, I…I’d like that I think.”

“Excellent. I…may I sit beside you?”

Will laughs. “It’s your counter.”

“Yes, but I didn’t want to impose closeness on you if you’re uncomfortable.. It’s a tight squeeze.”

Will shakes his head. “It’s fine.”

Hannibal gets up on a stool, pulling himself in close to take some cheese off the board. Will feels their shoulders brush and can’t help but shiver. Their eyes meet, and closer up Hannibal is even better looking than he is far away.

Oh shit.

Is he attracted to his father’s lover’s son?

Will looks away, blushing, and grabs a piece of salami off the board.

What exactly was he getting himself into?

Day 25: Mad Scientist

Abigail Hobbs was missing.

Her disappearance marked the sixth in less than four weeks, and all of Wolf Trap was in an uproar.

Who was taking them?

Were they safe?

Were they even still living?

The constable, a persistent voice on the radio and even in town meetings, told everyone he'd find the monster who was doing this.

"Don't be afraid," he said, "Every monster can't stay in the shadows forever."

And yet the police were no closer to finding the missing men and women than they had been a month ago.

No one knew what to do, or who to trust.

It was good then for Will Graham that he already trusted no one.

Wolf Trap had not been good to him, not now and not ever, which was why as people disappeared into the night he stood by doing nothing.

He knew who was behind the disappearances.

There was only one person it could be: Dr. Hannibal Lecter.

The good doctor had just recently moved to Wolf Trap not five weeks prior, and had captured the hearts of everyone around him. He was ever the showman, dressed to the nines even out of his doctor's office, and stealing hearts of whomever looked his way.

Will had never met Hannibal, only saw him from his deep rooted spot in the shadows, and yet he was utterly fascinated to watch such a polite monster take apart the town that had hurt him so deeply.

His father died being hated by the town, accused of killing his mother whose body had never been found, and Will was then ostracized in his place. If his only happiness could come from Wolf Trap's fall - so be it.

As long as he was here to watch.

The end of the sixth week he watched the town cower in fear from a monster in the dark that they courted in the light and wished he could be there.

Wished he could see.

It was just his bad luck that he was chosen as number seven.

Will had never met Dr. Lecter, not even in passing, and yet when he woke at the creak of a footstep in his bedroom he froze.

He was here.

Will didn't move, not even breathe, as Lecter drew closer. He didn't quite know what to do.

Should he open his eyes?

Did he even want to fight for his life?

His indecision was taken from him when a voice cut through his thoughts.

"I know you're awake, Mr. Graham, I can see your chest rising in fear."

Will opened his eyes and turned to look at him. "You don't wear a mask."

Dr. Lecter smiled, bowing in his fancy suit complete with night cape. "What need is there to be inconspicuous when the person I'm hunting will not be able to speak my name?"

He laughed. "I see your point, Doctor."

The smile faded on Lecter's face. "You're not frightened."

"Oh I am," Will said, his voice shaking as he wiped at his eyes, "But…more so of what you'll do, not of you doing it."

"Fascinating."

He came closer, not bothering to stalk, and sat on the edge of Will's bed.

"You took them all from their beds?"

"You obviously know that, Will," he said, "Since you knew it was I who did the stealing."

"Yes."

Lecter took his hand, and put two fingers on the inside of his wrist. "Your pulse is barely racing."

"I…"

"If you knew," he said, "Why did you not tell them?"

Will did shiver then, tears filling his eyes. “Because I wanted to see them all running in fear just…just like they did to my father.”

Lecter frowned. “Michael Graham.”

“Yes, he…”

He took Will’s hand in his. “Will, I’d like to apologize. I…I choose you because of the rumors surrounding your father, and that…others spoke ill of you. I thought perhaps I could frame the disappearances on you.”

Will laughed, falling forward, and let out a sob when he was pulled into Dr. Lecter’s arms.

“I should not have…I…”

He started to sob, clutching him harder, and was kissed on the temple making him shiver again.

“You are…an utterly fascinating creature and I…I almost snuffed out your burgeoning darkness. I will never forgive myself for that.”

Will sniffled as Lecter gently pressed him back, and reached out to touch his face. “I don’t…I don’t understand.”

“Will, I…I’d like to show you what I’ve been doing and perhaps…we can help each other.”

He blinked. “You want me to kill with you?”

Lecter smiled and reached out his hand for Will to take. “Do you not want to?”

Will stared at his outstretched hand, shaking, and felt tears continue to fall down his cheeks.

Did he?

Could he?

Will took his hand, the warmth of it so much hotter than he expected, and Lecter helped him stand. He was still in his bedclothes, and yet he felt not underdressed.

Not at all.

“Dr. Lecter…”

“Hannibal,” he was corrected, “I do believe we know each other well enough now we can lose formalities.”

“Hannibal,” Will said, as he was led out of his bedroom, “Just where are we going?”

“To my laboratory,” Hannibal said, smiling wide, “Where I…am attempting…to make life from death.”

Will's eyes widened. "How?"

He kissed Will's hand, and a sudden burst of lightning outside lit up the dark room so bright that his eyes looked like they were glowing.

"I'll show you," he said, smiling as he opened the door to reveal a magnificent coach so lush Will's eyes widened.

"I…"

"Are you having second thoughts already? Do you think me mad?"

Will turned to smile at him. "Yes, I think you are quite mad but no," he said, "I am not having a thought other than how soon can we get there and…can I watch?"

Hannibal laughed as he led Will through the mud, his toes touching and curling as the rain fell.

"Oh Will," he said, opening up the coach for Will to step through, "I am so happy I didn't kill you. So very, very pleased."

Will sat down on the plush seat, looking around, and his bare toes felt out of place.

"I should've changed my clothes."

Hannibal shook his head and patted the top of the coach alerting the driver who took off at once.

"Will," he said, taking Will's hands again, "You could not, you know that. If you had, they would've thought you were the one and…I do not want that of you. Not now."

Will looked behind him, frowning. "Your driver, does he…"

"He knows," Hannibal said, kissing Will's hands, "They all know, and their loyalty is everything to me. As yours will be."

Will blushed. "I…I don't quite know what to do, S…Hannibal. I've…it's been lonely but I've never been out of the shadows. I…I prefer to be alone."

Hannibal frowned. "Do you? Or did they make you think you had to?"

His eyes fill with tears. "I…I…"

"Will," he said, "I promise you, we'll take this town apart bit by bit until there's nothing left but bones beneath our feet. And then…we'll go to the next. And the next. Until there's nothing left."

Will smiled, his lip quivering. "You really want me with you for that long?"

Hannibal smiled, his eyes shining in the moonlight. “After tonight, Will, I never want to let you go.”

The words should’ve scared Will, he knew they should’ve.

And yet all he could do was smile.

Day 26: Paparazzi

Will Graham was a photographer.

He'd started out taking pictures when he was young, and his fascination with the camera blossomed over the years till he was working for the school newspaper and then interning at an actual paper that published his first photo.

It was the aftermath of a fire near his house, a shot of one of his neighbor's kids holding a teddy bear in her mother's arms outside a house in flames.

He got nominated for awards he didn't win, but it started his career.

Twenty years later he could barely call himself a photographer. He now lingered in the bushes of famous couples, chased ambulances, and even a few times got punched in the face for how far he would go.

Will was desperate, hungry, and had barely any clout left at any newspapers unless he had a picture no one else did.

It was pure luck when he saw the body.

He was nursing a black eye on the way home from missing out on catching Adam Towers sneaking out of some nobody's house at four a.m. Towers was notoriously in a relationship with Jean Duran, who ran Duran Studios. Towers was a reporter just slightly less reputable than Will himself, and his star had only begun to rise when he hooked up with the studio head. Duran was known for his connections to organized crime but many looked the other way.

Will had never seen someone look so terrified as Adam Towers did when Will got his picture.

“You slimy fuck!” he growled, knocking him down to the grass, “You fucking piece of bloody shit!”

“Hey, hey, I’m just doin’ my job!”

“Getting me killed is your job you stupid bint? You…”

“ADAM!”

They both turned as the nobody Towers had obviously been sneaking around with ran up to them, grabbing Will by the shirt with fire in his eyes. Will blinked, surprised, and saw the man in front of him looked nothing like he’d thought from the angle he’d taken the photo. He had a cleft lip, terrible hair, and obviously dressed like he was in a seventies porno.

“What the…fuck?”

“Elias, no!”

Elias dropped him, and Will coughed grabbing his camera as he watched them embrace. Elias pulled Adam into his arms, kissing him lovingly, and while Will had taken half a dozen photos of Adam Towers with Jean Duran over the past year he’d never seen him look like that.

Happy.

“I will break the camera,” Elias said, his voice shaking, “I…I will. I…”

Adam turned, tears still in his eyes. “No, I…I’ll tell him it was a mistake and…we just…” he stepped back, wiping his eyes, “We can’t do this anymore.”

“NO!” Elias yelled, running out but Adam put up a hand, “Stop, Curly. Just…stop. I have to…”

Will sighed, and looked at the pictures he’d taken.

They were good.

Really, really good.

And no one else was here for this.

Not one person.

He deleted every single one and turned it around. “They’re gone. Just…stop being so reckless. Ok?”

Towers blinked. “I…thank you.”

“It’s nothing,” he lied, holding out his card for Adam to take, “Just…next time you’re gonna pick a fight with your other boyfriend, call me so I can get a pic.”

Adam smiled. “I will.”

Will left them, feeling like an idiot, and went to find where he’d left his car.

He walked past a few dark alleys, shivering, and pulled up his coat. It was the beginning of fall, his favorite time, and a really stupid time to be alone with no one around. Thankfully Towers had decided to cheat in a decent area of town.

Will was halfway to his car when he saw something out of the corner of his eye.

It was a leg.

The leg was sticking half out from behind a dumpster, and he sighed thinking he'd just leave the person there. It wasn't his business, not really, but it was a cold night about to be colder. He headed over, ready to offer to help, when he froze.

No.

He couldn't help.

Will stared at the corpse, face missing and filled with what looked like wild flowers, with hands folded in her lap that was also filled with flowers and…her heart.

It was a crime scene, he knew that, possibly from one of the most notorious serial killers there was and ever would be.

And yet he still couldn't help but take a picture.

Then another.

And another.

Will took seven pictures from different angles, all the best he'd ever done, and was shaking when he called the Times.

“Hello?”

“Breaking news,” he said, “I…I found a body and I think…maybe…it’s from the Chesapeake Ripper.”

The pause on the other line made him frown.

“Hello?”

“Yeah, I…you’re sure?”

“Flowers? Weird positions? Carnage? Yeah, I’m sure.”

“Who is this?”

He laughed, shaking. “Will,” he said, “It’s Will Graham.”

“Send it in, Will, and…I can give you whatever you ask for as long as it’s on the front of tomorrow’s paper.”

Will leaned against the wall, shaking his head. “You…you got it.”

He ended the call, sent what he had, and sat there staring at the body of the murdered woman.

“Sweetheart,” he said, “You just made me ten grand.”

She didn’t reply, obviously, but he thought if he squinted just a little the way the flowers were arranged made it look like she was smiling.

Day 27: Adoptive Family

It was a closely guarded secret that Will Graham was *not* the King's true son.

The Queen, god rest her soul, had found him in the woods when he was barely able to crawl covered in blood and refused to listen to her husband when he wanted to send him off to the foundling home.

"He's mine," she said, "I know he's meant to be mine."

Those words were thrown back at Will in his twelfth year when he stood over his mother's body with fangs and fur begging his father to forgive him.

"I didn't mean to! I didn't mean to, Father! I didn't…"

The King pushed him down, wrapping his arms around Will's neck until he could hardly breathe, and whispered the words Will would hear for the rest of his life.

"You were *hers* , not mine."

The King remarried less than a year later to an angry young woman who resented Will and wanted him gone. It was only Will's own standing in the eyes of the people that kept him alive, he knew, for the next six years.

The people loved him.

They wanted him to be happy.

Which was why his father had the Ball.

Suitors from all corners of the world were invited to come, with offers of gold and jewels to the King who so desperately wanted to get rid of the monster in his house. Will did as he was told, though he had to struggle with the monster he'd kept inside for so long, and was pulled aside by the King before the night was over.

"What are you doing, boy?" he snarled, pulling Will's arm, "You're to flatter and tempt these suitors, no matter who they are, and stop being a ghost among them. Your face is the only thing that will make them want you….use it."

Will was in tears as he nodded, shaking, and danced with several suitors trying to feign coquettishness. He was the King's only son, a prize, and he must be that.

He must.

The nameless faces of all sexes started to blur and Will found himself in a state of fear especially when Lord Chilton pawed at him as they danced, and rubbed his hardness against Will's thigh. He snarled, pulling away, and saw his hands were claws running out to the balcony.

Will was in tears as he tried to calm down, staring up at the full moon, and knowing that was the cause of this. He could feel the moon pulling him in, tearing at his resolve, and he let out a sob.

"Mother," he whispered, "I…I…"

"Are you alright?"

He turned, tears in his eyes, and saw a man who he'd not seen this evening.

The man was pale, with eyes almost red, and as he got closer Will's monster calmed.

"No," he said, "I am not."

The man held out his hand, and Will took it.

"Prince Hannibal Lecter," he said, "Last of my line. A very, old line."

Will frowned. "Why…your hand is quite cold, sir. Are you ill?"

Hannibal smiled up at Will, and the fangs he showed made Will's heart skip a beat.

"No, Will," he said, "Just…different. Like you."

"I'm not, I…"

Hannibal kissed Will's hand, licking, and he shivered. "This is not your home," he said, "It was never meant to be your life. Your father, he's looking for you."

"My father hates me."

Hannibal growled, and Will shuddered at the sound. "Your *real* father. We're to be wed, Will, and I will not take no for an answer."

"I don't know you, Sir," Will said, not letting go of his hand, "I…I do not know you at all. This is madness. I am my father's son, and you…you're a…"

"Blood drinker," Hannibal said, pulling him closer, "Nosferatu. Vamphir. I have many names, but they all mean the same."

Will had tears in his eyes. “What would a vampire want with a monster?”

Hannibal smiled, leaning in to whisper in Will’s ear. “He wants to show him the world, and that not all monsters are bad. Some…just need someone to love them.”

A tear fell down Will’s cheek.

“No one could ever love me.”

He pressed his lips to Will’s cheek softly. “I could,” he said, “If you would let me.”

Will closed his eyes.

Should he trust the feelings he was having now?

Was Hannibal being truthful?

Did Will have a real family?

He let out a sob, and pressed his nose against Hannibal’s neck breathing in.

“Please, Prince,” he said, “Take me away.”

“As you wish.”

Day 28: Unicorns

The likelihood of giving birth to a unicorn was one in a million.

Which was why by the time Will Graham was thirty five there was only one.

Dr. Hannibal Lecter, unattainable unicorn and brilliant psychiatrist booked up for literal years, was the only living unicorn in all the world. Born to parents long dead and without family his status seemed to grow higher the longer he stayed single.

The old wives tales about unicorns, their sexual prowess, their intelligence, and their beauty, made him such a catch that the man could hardly leave the house without getting mobbed by crowds.

Everyone wanted the unicorn for themselves, and yet as Will saw interview after interview his thoughts were not about himself. They were about Hannibal. He saw the tiredness in his eyes, the loneliness, and longed to just see him smile.

Just once.

He knew he'd never get to meet him, though truth be told he'd much rather know Hannibal was living his best life alone, so he just watched interviews and read books about him. Really about all unicorns. The phenomena began nearly a hundred years prior when Abigail Goode was born with a glittering horn in the middle of her forehead. The townspeople wanted the baby dead, thinking her a demon, but her parents refused so they raised her alone.

Abigail by chance met and fell in love with a young man named Horace and had two twin girls: Emma and Elsie, neither of which was like their mother.

She was forced to be tested on, poked and prodded, but she lived happily till she died.

Abigail was the first of ten known unicorns.

Hannibal was the last.

Will found himself filled with dread when Hannibal was seen with someone new, articles showing up like, “Has the unicorn been claimed?” like he was a prize to be won. Sure unicorns were supposed to be great, but even Will could see Hannibal was unhappy.

Weren’t unicorns supposed to be loved?

The dreams began on the eve of Will’s thirty fifth birthday. He’d watched an interview with Hannibal, who said all the right things and yet seemed lost to Will who’d followed every show and article since Hannibal was a teenager. He wasn’t happy, and anyone with eyes should’ve seen that.

He went to bed, curled up alone surrounded by his pack, and fell into a nightmare.

Blood.

So much blood and bodies.

And at the center of it all, entirely naked on all fours was a man with a bloody horn in the middle of his forehead. Will couldn’t see his face, and yet he knew it could only be one person.

“Hannibal?”

Hannibal turned, chest heaving, and eyes lit while his once golden horn was covered in blood and guts.

“They wouldn’t stop,” Hannibal growled, “They just…they wouldn’t stop.”

Will walked up to him slowly, chest aching, and reached out to touch his horn. Hannibal made a noise that wasn’t quite human, but Will suspected most unicorns weren’t.

“They deserved it,” he said, his voice shaking, “They should’ve left you alone. You’re not a prize to be won.”

Hannibal’s gaze softened, and he grabbed Will’s wrist.

“Who are you? You’re not…I didn’t put you here.”

Will shook his head with tears in his eyes. “Will,” he said, “Will Graham.”

Hannibal reached out and licked Will’s wrist, and the feel made Will moan as heat seemed to bleed through him. He was shaking, but made no move away, and Hannibal’s eyes lit with something other than anger.

“I’m coming for you, Will,” he said, as Will groaned, coming in his pants like a teenager, “I’m coming.”

Will woke up having come in his pajama pants, covered in sweat, and barely able to catch his breath.

What was that?

And why did he want to close his eyes and do it again?

Day 29: Where It All Went Wrong

Things didn't go as Hannibal hoped they would after he and Will were pulled out of the water.

Will lay still for days later in the houseboat, breathing normally but healing, and Hannibal sat with him telling Will just what he hoped their life together would be.

“We’re free to be ourselves now,” he said, holding Will’s hand, “And…explore this newfound darkness you’ve let loose, and we can share in it. Together.”

Chiyoh would give him looks, pitiful glances though she never once said a word to such, and even when they were alone she’d hardly speak.

Will was his constant companion, even though in reality he was not really there.

Hannibal would sleep beside him, sure not to touch in any lascivious way, and his hopes for Will to awaken only grew. He just knew Will would be happy to finally be free from all that had held him down for so long, and be grateful that they were together.

Will was neither of those things when he finally did awaken.

He was, in fact, angrier than he’d ever been.

“I’m…alive,” he said, his voice shaking as he lifted his bandaged arm, “I…”

“Yes,” Hannibal said, leaning in closer, “Chiyoh was waiting for us in case we needed a quick escape and I was more than happy to swim us to her. She’s…”

He reached for Will's hand only to be violently pushed away. "DON'T TOUCH ME!"

Hannibal froze.

This was not what was supposed to happen.

Not after Will finally gave in to his darker nature.

"Will?"

Will looked at him with tears in his eyes. "Did you really think that I…I threw us off a fucking cliff so we could run away together? Seriously?"

Hannibal's chest ached. "I…"

"I wanted us to die, Hannibal, after…after doing *that* and feeling *that* I…I'm a fucking monster now who got off on killing someone and I…FUCK!"

He put his head in his hands, pulling at his hair, and groaned while Hannibal just stared.

This was not the Will he'd hoped for.

No.

This was the Will of his nightmares.

Hannibal left him, unsure of what to do, and found Chiyoh steering the boat listening to music he could barely hear it was so low. He sat down on a bench, defeated, and she turned to look at him.

“He’s awake?”

“Yes.”

Chiyoh looked out. “He’s angry with you.”

“Yes.”

“He’s…”

“You already know what he is.”

She turned to look at him. “He’s not the monster you hoped to drag out of the water.”

Hannibal blinked back tears.

“No, he is not.”

Chiyoh frowned, looking away.

“Perhaps,” she said, “There’s still hope to drag the monster out of him.”

“I spent years trying to do just that, Chiyoh,” he said, “I believe, perhaps, it’s a lost cause.”

“You’ve never given up on a cause before, Hannibal, not one you truly cared about.”

He looked at her. “No, but…”

She smiled at him. “Do you care for this one?”

Hannibal’s heart felt like it was breaking as he spoke. “Yes, I…I care very deeply.”

“Then, I believe, it’s not over.”

He stood up, feeling a renewed sense of self, and headed back to where he’d left Will only to find him just how he’d left him.

“Will?”

Will lifted his head, tears covering his face, and glared at him. “Don’t,” he said, “Just… don’t.”

Hannibal stepped into the room, ignoring him, and heard Will’s growl of frustration.

“Hannibal, I said—”

He went right to where he knew Chiyoh showed him the knives she’d brought with her, long beautiful creations that he’d admired but hoped to never use. Hannibal turned and held up one such knife - silver bladed with a blue handle.

“You said you wanted to die.”

“Y..yes.”

Hannibal came to the bed, sat on the edge, and held out the knife. “Here’s your chance.”

Will blinked. “What?”

“You want to die, as you’ve said. Now is your chance to do just that. Take it.”

He stared at the knife, tears still fresh on his face, and reached out with a shaky hand. Hannibal resisted the urge to grab hold of the handle when Will did, and watched with a sudden fear as he looked at the weapon.

“Why don’t you just kill me yourself?”

“I don’t want to.”

Will looked up at him, tears once again filling his eyes. “I hate you so much.”

“I know.”

He moved to put the knife to his neck, pressing as he didn’t look away from Hannibal.

“You…you ruined my life, you…you…” he let out a sob, “I…”

Hannibal found his vision was blurring through his own tears as he watched a line of blood go down Will’s neck.

“I love you,” he said, his voice shaking, “I did not want to see you continue to suffer pretending to be someone you weren’t. I wanted…I needed…to see you reach your true potential. I…I…”

Will let out a sob and to his shock knocked him to the ground. Hannibal gasped in surprise as Will pinned him to the floor, knife to his throat, and Will’s tears hit his cheeks as he stared down at him.

“If I kill you now,” Will said, “Would that be enough, Doctor? Would....would that make you happy?”

Hannibal smiled,reaching up to touch his face. “More so than watching you kill yourself.”

Will pressed the knife in harder, shaking, and Hannibal put his hand over Will’s to help.

“I…I…”

“Just breathe,” he said, “And let everything else disappear.”

Will suddenly wrenched his hand away, letting out a sob, and collapsed against his chest.

“I can’t,” he said, his voice barely a whisper, “I…I can’t.”

The words were not “I love you too” but to Hannibal they might as well be. He made no move to touch Will’s hair, only enjoying the feeling of him, and Will didn’t move.

“I know.”

It wasn’t what he’d hoped for, but for now it was enough.

Day 30: The Good End

It was strange being a father to someone who clearly didn't want one, let alone two, and yet Will cherished even the anger on his daughter's face.

"No."

"Abigail, c'mon. You know it's…"

Abigail crossed her arms, glaring at him. "You're seriously gonna just let him? I can't believe you."

Will blinked. "Let him…what are you talking about?"

She frowned. "Wait, you don't know?"

Will dropped his fork on the table, looking around, and leaned in closer to her. "Know what?"

"Hannibal has a date," she said, "And you're sitting here asking me to go to some bookstore with you when we could be spying on him!"

He blushed, picking his fork back up to take a bite. "I don't know why you think I'd care about that."

Abigail sighed. "Will, don't pretend I'm five years old. I've lived with you and Hannibal for nearly a year. I've seen the way he looks at you and you him. I…I was there for *Babette* ."

Will froze, his lip curling.

Babette.

He could still remember her screams.

“That was…it didn’t mean anything.”

Abigail groaned. “I give up,” she said, standing with a dramatic flourish, “I’ve got homework and you apparently have a bookstore to walk around in.”

“Ab…”

Hannibal came into the room wearing one of his best suits - dark gray with red stripes and a red matching tie. He looked, as always, amazing, and Will found himself blushing a little at the thought.

“I apologize for the lackluster breakfast, but I have some business to attend to this morning,” he said, fixing his buttons as he leaned over to kiss Abigail’s cheek, “I will see you both sometime this evening.”

Will frowned. “Where…I mean…why are you gonna be gone so long?”

Hannibal paused. “I…I have a…an afternoon meeting.”

“For six hours?”

Abigail grinned from her spot in the doorway, chewing on her toast. “Is it a *date* ?”

Hannibal frowned. “I wouldn’t exactly call it that, I am meeting with a museum curator who has offered me part time work at a showing for the next few weeks. He…”

“ *He* ?” Will asked, his voice rising maybe a bit too much.

“Yes, *he,”* Hannibal sighed, “I must be off. I will allow both of you to interrogate me later. Have a good day.”

Will frowned, suddenly losing his appetite as he let his fork fall.

“So….”

He looked at her and sighed. “Get your coat,” he said, “We’re going on a hunt.”

Abigail clapped her hands, running over to hug him tight. “Does this mean you’re finally gonna get your head out of your ass and kiss him? Cuz I’m hoping to be out of the house for that.”

Will felt sudden nerves make him clutch her harder.

“Maybe.”

She kissed his cheek and smiled. “Maybe is better than no. Come on, Will,” she said, “Let’s go see who your competition is.”

Will’s lip curled.

“Or who’s just next on the menu,” he said, almost growling.

Abigail laughed. “I’ve heard the way to a serial killer’s heart is with…someone else’s. Wanna see if it’s true?”

Will grabbed the butter knife off the table and stabbed his pancake hard. “We’ll see where the day takes us.”

She pulled him Will fast and started pushing him down the hall.

“We gotta hurry up then! We’ll miss him if we don’t! Do you know what you’re gonna wear?”

Will laughed, and hugged her tight.

“No, and I’m a little terrified to even think about it.”

Abigail looked up at him, still smiling, and put both her hands on his chest. “Let me see your closet, ok? But first, I need to go look at Hannibal’s tablet to see where he’s eating at. Go shower, and…we can start Operation Murder Husband.”

Will blushed.

“This is a terrible idea. Maybe…”

She pushed him toward the bathroom, and shut the door.

“GET IN THAT SHOWER! DON’T OVERTHINK JUST DO IT!”

Will started the water and stared as the room filled up with steam.

Could he really do this?

It had been a year already, and they were ok.

Hannibal was content with them just being friends and maybe that's all they'd ever be.

Will sighed.

Could he put himself out there, showing Hannibal that what happened back in Baltimore hadn't been a fluke.

He could still remember a year later what it felt like to watch the life leave Jack Crawford's eyes, and how happy he'd been to see Hannibal beside him.

He wanted this.

Desperately.

But maybe Hannibal didn't.

He took off his clothes and got under the water, leaning against the tile.

Could he do this and be ok with being rejected, possibly breaking up their Murder Family?

He closed his eyes.

Maybe, just maybe, he could.

Hannibal still didn't know about Babette, and that had felt like a living nightmare to watch. He couldn't let Hannibal get close to anyone else.

Not anyone.

Will let the water run down his back and breathed out a rough breath.

"I can do this."

He *would* do this.

Or get his heart broken trying.

Day 31: Pick 2- Underwater Soulmate

The wishing well had always been a kind of magical place for the town of Wolf Trap.

People would go there, wish for whatever they desired, and hope that they would be the lucky one to have their wish come true.

The magic didn't work for everyone, not really, but those bestowed with their wishes were among the most revered in town.

Will Graham was not one of those people.

His father, the now late Michael Graham, had forbidden him from going to the wishing well for as long as he could remember.

It was "evil" he'd tell him, a "monster trying to buy its freedom", and no matter how many times Will begged he would not let him near the well that was less than a mile from his own home. Will could see the well from his bedroom window, almost mocking him, and sometimes he'd wish for things anyway just because he knew he'd never get to.

"I want a new mom," was his first.

He'd been almost excited when his father started to date Ms. Alana Bloom, but she soon fell for the daughter of the big businessman who mysteriously died two days before the two women got married . Alana never said she wished for such a thing, but Will had seen the happiness in Margot Verger's eyes at her brother's funeral.

His next wish was a bit darker.

"I want Freddie Lounds to lose her fingers."

Freddie was one of Will's worst bullies throughout his teenage years. She'd always found ways to mock him in the halls, and even wrote terrible things about him on the stall of the girls' bathroom.

Nothing happened to her, thank goodness really, but still he'd thought for a moment that they might.

His third wish was even more sinister.

"I want my father to die."

His father had just hours before Will made this horrible wish, taken Will's dog Winston to the city pound telling him they could no longer care for it. Winston was Will's best and only friend, and he'd cried so hard he could hardly breathe when he spoke the words into the night.

Michael Graham did not die that night.

He'd come home, drunker than ever, and passed out on the couch.

Will was fifteen years old as he stood in the living room holding a knife he was so angry, and wished over and over for some monster to come in to kill his father.

The monster did not.

But twenty years later Will stood at his father's graveside and looked over across the way at the wishing well.

Had it finally given him his wish?

He hardly heard the preacher, leaving before the casket was lowered, and despite the sudden fear in him he'd be dragged off as he had so many times he went to the well. Will hadn't been home since he'd graduated, though there had been times when he'd thought to come but the news of the well drying up made him so upset he couldn't imagine returning.

The wishes stopped coming true, he'd heard, and the town hardly ever came here now.

Will stared down the wall, hands shaking, and sighed.

"I always wanted to come here," he said, "But my father wouldn't let me. I…I wished so many wishes and only the last one came true."

He laughed as tears filled his eyes. "And I'm not even sure it did. You know? I…"

Will froze when the pail began to turn and lower itself down. He didn't move, hardly let out a breath, and thought perhaps it was just the wind.

Yes, it was just the wind.

He heard the pail stop with a dry thud, and waited for something more.

Anything.

Will waited for what felt like hours, and was about to leave when his hand tingled. He looked down, and to his shock he saw something he'd expected to see.

A soulmark.

Soulmarks were so rare, especially these days, that to receive one was a miracle. He ran his fingers over the mark, confused at the obvious waves, and what looked like…eyes.

Will jumped when the pail started to come up, his heart beating wildly in his chest, and he could hardly breathe when he saw there was something inside. He reached in and pulled out what felt like a rock.

And dropped it immediately.

There, plain as day, was his soulmark drawn beautifully on the rock.

His hand was shaking when he picked it up, and turned it over.

HELP ME.

Will's eyes were wide as he leaned down, staring into nothingness. "Hello?"

He heard a low growl, like something out of a nightmare, and his whole body felt warm at the sound.

"Hello."

What was down there?

And why did he feel like it might be his soulmate?

Works inspired by this one

I Wish You Were Mine by slashyrogue

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!